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ABSTRACT

This volume contains presentations and workshop papers from the International Congress on "The European Dimension of Vocational Training--Experiences and Tasks" that provided those with responsibility for vocational training a forum for analyzing and discussing challenges that have emerged from European cooperation in vocational training. Two introductory speeches (Karl-Hans Laermann and Achilleas Mitsos) precede the workshop papers. Workshop A, "The Bottom-Up Approach to Europe," looks at the form and content of projects based primarily on the initiative of chambers, companies, schools, and other vocational training institutions and designed to promote transnational cooperation in initial and continuing vocational training. Its first topic, "Euro-Regions--Transnational Cooperation in Border Areas," is addressed in an introduction (Jochen Reuling), two case studies (Kurt Bang; Bob Bierling and Horst Scheel), and panel discussion. Its second topic, "Large Companies Elsewhere in Europe--Vocational Training Cooperation within and between Companies," is considered in an introduction (Richard Koch), three case studies (Hanne Sampson; Friedwald Bracht; Ulrich Gruber), and panel discussion. Its third topic, "The Relationship between Local Initiatives and European Promotion Programmes," is covered in an introduction (Richard Koch), presentation (Helmut Brumhard), and panel discussion. Workshop B, "Training for Europe," looks at a European professional training area that is taking shape. Its first topic, "Occupation-Related Foreign Language Instruction," is addressed in an introduction (Brigitte Wolf), two presentations (Jan van Weeren; Dorothea Weidinger), and panel discussion. Its second topic, "Occupational Skills for Europe-Wide Competence," is considered in an introduction (Brigitte Wolf), three practical examples (Marina Schurmann; Johannes van de Vosse; Ferdinand Fuchs), and panel discussion. Its third topic, "Provision for Latecomers in the Training System: Recognition of Young Workers' Work Experience and Previous Learning Record," is covered in an introduction (Brigitte Wolf), four presentations (Annie Bouder; Ruud Klarus; Marinella Giovine; Peter-Werner Kloas), and panel discussion. Workshop C, "European Vocational Training Research," presents results from research programs. Its first topic, "Prospects for Company-Based Initial Vocational Training in Europe," is addressed in an introduction (Jochen Reuling), three presentations (Rene Lassere; Maria Hofstatter; Arthur Schneeberger), and a panel discussion. Its second topic, "Continuing Training and Company Organization Development in Europe," is considered in an introduction (Edgar Sauter), presentation (Ingrid Drexel), and panel discussion. Its third topic, "Vocational Training Systems and Global Competition," is covered in an introduction (Richard Koch), two presentations (David Soskice; Felix Rauner), and panel discussion. Other contents are "Main Findings of the Workshop Sessions" (Hermann Schmidt), "Closing Discussion" (moderated by Alfred Hardenacke), and a participant list. (YLB)

Richard Koch
Jochen Reuling (Eds.)

Congress Report

ED 392 881

The European Dimension in Vocational Training

Experiences and Tasks of Vocational Training Policy in the Member States of the European Union

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Introduction

Professor Dr Karl-Hans Laermann,
Federal Minister of Education and Science, Federal Republic of Germany

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to be able to welcome you to this International Congress on "The European Dimension of Vocational Training – Experiences and Tasks" organized jointly by the Federal Ministry of Education and Science and the Federal Institute for Vocational Training. The Congress, which is being held in cooperation with the Länder governments, the social partners and the European Commission, underlines the importance which the Federal Republic of Germany attaches to vocational training within the framework of its presidency in the European Union. Moreover, bringing together as it does some 350 participants from 20 countries and representatives of OECD, ILO and UNESCO, this Congress is the largest education and training event organized in Germany during the German presidency.

The aims of the Congress, which is deliberately being held in conjunction with "Training 1994", the trade fair presenting new developments and trends in vocational training, are twofold. On the one hand it is intended to provide all those who bear responsibility for vocational training – policy-makers, researchers and practitioners – with a forum for analysing and discussing the new challenges and experiences which have emerged from European cooperation in the field of vocational training. On the other, the Congress will draw conclusions for the policy-making and practical dimensions of vocational training in Europe.

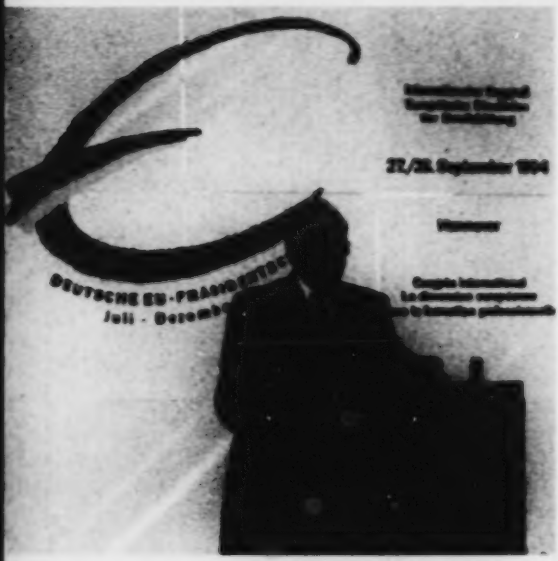
Cooperation in education and training within the European Union has already made rapid progress and the Maastricht Treaty has now assigned it even greater importance as an instrument of European integration. This applies in particular to the vocational education and training sector which, in addition to its strictly educational importance, will be a key player in sustaining the process of economic restructuring and development and in reducing social inequalities in Europe.

It is the unanimous view of the European Union and its Member States that labour market policy and economic policy are not alone sufficient to handle the problems associated first and foremost with fully implementing the Single Market and its corollaries, freedom of movement and establishment, but also those associated with the increase in unemployment in Europe, the introduction of new technologies in ever shorter innovation cycles, the increasing globalization of markets and increasingly fierce global competition.

If Europe is to be successful in accommodating future political, economic and structural change, labour market policy and economic policy need to be backed up by special training initiatives which, in the medium to long term, will offer all young people a broad-based, quality vocational training and the workforce continuing training opportunities allowing for flexibility in lifelong learning.

Here, however, vocational training must not be allowed to be reduced merely to an offshoot of European structural and industry policy. Vocational training must, after all, continue to be seen as more than just the process of generating occupational competence – other important elements are the development of key skills such as those associated with personality development, the development of methodology and social skills and the development of language and cultural competence. Only thus can young and adult members of the workforce gain access to rewarding employment involving working on one's own responsibility and offering long-term career prospects within Europe.

Strengthening the forward-looking approach to vocational training must also mean endowing it with an increasingly pronounced European dimension. In view of the clear statements in the Maastricht Treaty concerning the principle of subsidiarity and the full responsibility borne by the Member States for the nature and design of their vocational training systems and for preserving cultural diversity and identity, this cannot signify any form of standardization or harmonization of vocational training in Europe. The salient point is to secure unity in diversity. Just as competition is the prime driving force for economic performance, working together and alongside each other will have to be a prime driving force for improving the performance of education and training systems in Europe. Europe-wide competition on the labour market will in any case put increasing pressure on these national systems to raise their competitiveness. This might then provide an occasion for questioning the validity of conventional thinking in some fields, for analysing the strengths and weaknesses of the national systems and, where appropriate, for venturing out in new directions.



Professor Dr Karl-Hans Laermann

There is also a need for gearing national education and training systems to accommodate European developments and needs – for example by ensuring that they produce the competences required to work Community-wide and by making access to their various structures flexible and intelligible in the interest of the citizens. The EU vocational training policy laid down in the Maastricht Treaty can therefore only be developed on a step-by-step basis in a long-term process of partnership and cooperation between the Union and the Member States.

Notwithstanding the responsibility held by the Member States for the substance and design of their vocational education and training, there will be a need to define joint objectives and guidelines at EU level and these will have to be open and flexible. The decision-making on how these are to be implemented at national level will remain the responsibility of the Member States. Only thus is it possible to take due account of different national circumstances with their traditionally different regional and cultural specificities and only thus can vocational education and training policy respond flexibly to changing social, economic and labour market needs.

The objective must be to promote Europe-centred cooperation between and among the Member States using a "bottom-up" approach whereby an intensive

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exchange of information and exchange schemes for individuals will make it possible to build up a clear understanding of the different vocational training systems within the European Union, and European programmes and transnational initiatives will provide a foundation for launching innovative ideas.

Performance in developing so-called "Euro-skills" will become an increasingly important criterion for the quality and attractiveness of vocational training. To my mind it is necessary to give such Euro-skills a more prominent place in initial and continuing vocational training, even if not all occupational fields and economic sectors are equally affected by the changes taking place on Europe's single market.

Euro-competence in one's own occupation, in foreign languages, understanding the different political and economic systems in Europe, understanding the legal and social regulations in other Member States and understanding the lifestyles of one's European neighbours – these are all to be developed by giving national training regulations a European dimension, by making exchange schemes and training periods abroad an integral part of national vocational training systems and by strengthening the international and European element in vocational information and counselling.

The EC programmes – of which PETRA, FORCE, EUROTECNET and LINGUA have been of particularly positive effect for vocational training – have already done much to promote the European dimension. Examples in this connection include exchange schemes to share professional and intercultural experience, the integration of European aspects in national initial and continuing training provision and the promotion of occupation-related foreign language learning.

In addition to their success in quantitative terms, the programmes have also brought quality improvements to vocational training in the Member States and given impetus for innovation in national vocational training policy. It was partly the experience gained with the PETRA programme, for example, which caused the German Federal Government, in its report on safeguarding Germany's future as a major economic centre, to call for more provision for periods spent abroad during initial vocational training. The Council Resolution on the quality and attractiveness of vocational training which is to be adopted during the Germany presidency in the EU and which I will examine in more detail later, also acknowledges that strengthening transnational exchanges in initial and continuing training in the European Union will be an important element in raising the prestige and attractiveness of vocational training.

I believe that young people and many older people already in employment will increasingly want to use the EU as a "learning arena". They expect to be able to build up on or complement their initial training in other EU Member States. Our education and training systems and institutions must become more open and accommodating for citizens from other EU Member States. The still existing barriers to mobility must be removed.

Because our economies are becoming increasingly European and international, it can be anticipated that a variety of new forms of labour mobility between the Member States will emerge in the medium term. In many cases these will involve temporary periods of training or work abroad for specialists at all levels, and in some cases the stays abroad will be organized within large companies. European labour markets are likely to develop on a step-by-step basis. Many people will have to learn to communicate and cooperate across borders in their work. This is already daily routine in some industries. Knowledge and experience of living and working conditions in other Member States will become increasingly important in commerce but also for cooperation ventures in the industrial, crafts and services sectors.

Europe-wide mobility is thus not only dependent on the legal provision therefor. More important is that individuals be prepared to make full use of the new possibilities for mobility and look for training and employment opportunities beyond their national borders. The opportunities offered by the European Union and the characteristics needed to avail oneself of them must therefore be made known to people in all sectors of education and training and in particular those in the vocational training sector.

Young people in initial vocational training should have much better prospects of spending periods of study and training abroad. The same applies to teaching and training personnel. Only thus can "Euro-experience" be handed on to others.

The first steps in tackling this agenda for strengthening European cooperation in education and training during this current decade are being taken this year. After difficult negotiations it was possible, before expiry of the Greek presidency, to reach political agreement on the so-called joint opinion of the Council on the future education programmes SOCRATES and LEONARDO. The German presidency in the Council of the European Union will continue the work commenced during the Greek presidency. The proposed programmes are currently in their second reading at the European Parliament. Unlike in other Member States, responsibility for both programmes in Germany rests with the Federal Ministry of Education and

Science. I am very keen to see both programmes finally adopted in December 1994 so that they can enter into force as scheduled on 1 January 1995 and we can thus avoid any interruption in the transition from the successful education programmes which have been run to date. I am certain that the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission will all do all they can to ensure that these programmes, which signify a new step forward in education cooperation in Europe, will be successful.

I consider it a positive sign that 80% of the total LEONARDO budget has been earmarked to be shared roughly equally between transnational pilot projects and exchange schemes; such activities have been very successful in the past. In this connection provisions have been included for the extra-university initial vocational training sector to ensure that the hitherto successful PETRA programme activities can continue to receive support at the same level. Provision has also been made for a considerable expansion of the exchange schemes for young people in initial vocational training and young adults in employment, an exchange sector which has hitherto lagged far behind the exchange schemes already operating in the higher education sector.

In addition to welcoming the imminent adoption of the major new European education programmes LEONARDO and SOCRATES I would like to draw attention to the EU initiatives planned for the years 1994 to 1999 to be funded by the European Social Fund. These will be further important instruments for promoting transnational, innovative vocational training activities within the European Union. Of particular interest are the Community initiatives EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT, which are to come on stream before the end of 1994, because they attach particular priority to promoting vocational training measures for specific target groups such as women, disadvantaged young people, the disabled, the long-term unemployed, and also for persons whose jobs are at risk and small and medium enterprises.

Although the LEONARDO programme and the Community initiatives adopt different approaches – one promoting "classical" vocational training policy and the other labour market policy goals – in the final analysis they can be seen to have much in common and various areas of overlap.

The initiative taken by the European Commission to secure complementarity between these two targets for promotion at European and national level is therefore one which should be welcomed. Establishing such complementarity, however, must be concentrated on developing a limited number of concrete and practicable coordination and procedural regulations at national and European level in order to

avoid both excessive red tape which would hinder programme implementation and the establishment of new institutions and networks.

Conceivable here might be a coordinated approach to project promotion whereby, for example, pilot projects, concepts and instruments developed within the framework of LEONARDO would be replicated and disseminated at national and European level using funding from the Community initiatives. Such an approach would also open up possibilities of not only increasing the number of vocational training activities but also of further raising their quality standard.

Alongside these comments on the adoption of the SOCRATES and LEONARDO education programmes I would also like to draw attention to two other initiatives, namely two Council Resolutions which are scheduled for adoption during the German presidency.

Firstly, the Resolution on the quality and attractiveness of vocational training. The quality and attractiveness of initial vocational training are validated first and foremost by a successful transition from training to employment. Major indicators at play here are the up-to-dateness of the training offered, its relevance to labour market needs and the safeguarding of a uniform quality standard within each Member State.

Experience has demonstrated the particular merit in this respect of procedures which assign the social partners a decisive role in the development, recognition and modernization of vocational training measures. Such procedures enhance the acceptance of vocational training among both employers and young people.

In order to sustain the supply of highly skilled young workers who have a broad-based experience of real-life work routines, initial vocational training must be made more attractive for highly capable and career-minded youngsters. Vocational training with a strong practical component undergone in close proximity to a real-life work situation has to overcome its reputation as being a second-rate alternative in the eyes of those who are striving in increasing numbers for a place in higher education.

It is first and foremost the business community and the public administration who need such highly skilled young workers and who are therefore called upon to take action here. They must ensure that through appropriate human resource development measures they can offer capable young skilled workers who are keen to train further career and self-advancement prospects which are as attractive as those offered to higher education graduates.

The opportunities on offer in the vocational training sector must be enhanced to accommodate the interests of such youngsters and young adults. The existing traineeships, for example, could make additional provision for more demanding, recognized supplementary qualifications for the more capable trainees. A systematic interweaving of initial and continuing training could also create new and recognized training tracks which pave the way for access to more attractive jobs.

The attractiveness and social prestige of vocational training are also largely determined by the degree to which equivalence is conceded between vocational qualifications and general education (academic) qualifications and by the way in which society at large "rates" skilled manual occupations. For this reason too, vocational training must be more than merely making a person fit to do a job. Vocational training with a strong practical component has to be developed as an integral part of the education and training system on an equal footing with general education and must therefore, like the latter, always also aim to develop general knowledge and a comprehensive range of personal and social skills alongside its focus on occupation-specific competence.

Equal standing for vocational training and general education also signifies that access to higher-level education and training tracks is equally open to both sectors. An initial vocational training plus relevant continuing training should be regarded as adequate qualification for access to higher education, for example.

One of the prerequisites for making full use of the possibilities of mobility is that national qualifications are marketable everywhere on the European labour market. National regulations which make access to occupations dependent on the formal recognition of vocational qualifications or on the acknowledgment of the comparability thereof should therefore be kept to a minimum. What should be decisive for access to an occupation and the corresponding employment opportunities is what the individual can offer in terms of qualifications in the broadest sense of the term, i.e. including his or her work experience. Transparency is therefore required with regard to the qualifications awarded in the Member States. The most expedient way of creating transparency is to develop and introduce certificates which are genuinely intelligible and informative to prospective employers outside the country of issue.

Methods should be developed for describing the occupational competence acquired through initial and continuing training in several languages and so clearly that the associated knowledge and skills can be directly compared with those required at a vacant post. It is also necessary that Member States make a more

determined effort to improve the information and counselling services available to persons wishing to train or work in another Member State. They should also support transnational cooperation in this field.

The items I have referred to are the cornerstones for enhancing the attractiveness of vocational training – a goal aspired to by all Member States – and will be the core elements of the German presidency's proposal for a Council Resolution.

Secondly, we are preparing a Council Resolution on educational research and statistics. The education policy goals set out in the Maastricht Treaty can only be reached on the basis of a full and detailed knowledge of the initial and continuing education and training systems in the Member States and of these systems' comparability. This in turn presupposes the systematic analysis of all the statistical material available. The existing statistical analysis mechanisms at EU level could be improved in terms of both information value and comparability. A sound statistical basis could then serve as the basis for expanding educational research at European level. Strengthening educational research at national level, however, is a prerequisite for expanding cooperation at EU level and allowing education research to function in Europe as a source of innovation for the future.

The presidency therefore, in consultation with the European Commission, is intending to submit to the Council of Ministers of Education for its meeting on 5th December 1994 a proposal for a Council Resolution to promote education statistics and education research.

It is thus a whole series of important questions which are awaiting responses from initiatives to cooperate within Europe in the field of vocational training and which have been tackled as priority issues by the German presidency. It is to these questions that this International Congress will address itself.

Alongside examining these questions from the scientific and policy-making viewpoints, the Congress will also pay special attention to the local experience already gained from transnational cooperation ventures. Initiators and practitioners from Germany and other countries will be presenting selected projects for discussion during the workshop sessions.

Both the panel discussions on each main topic and the workshops will have contributions from German and foreign experts representing the social partners, the governments, the scientific community and the practitioners. This approach respects the clear intention of the Congress to examine the topics from various national viewpoints and draw the corresponding conclusions. The main issues to be discussed are the following:

- form and substance of transnational cooperation projects in initial and continuing vocational training, primarily projects which have been initiated by chambers, companies, schools or other vocational/professional institutions and could serve as models for European cooperation;
- findings and results obtained from transnational pilot projects in the field of European education cooperation and national reform initiatives to introduce innovative approaches and a European dimension into vocational training;
- present and future role of employers in initial and continuing training in the light of changes in the demand for education and increasingly global economic competition.

Beyond providing for an exchange of experience and a discussion on the possibilities and limitations of European vocational training policy, the Congress will also help draw conclusions as to what the tasks of education and training policy in the Member States now are. The workshop sessions and particularly the panel discussion with Under-Secretary Dr Schaumann and eminent colleagues from abroad promise to be interesting in this respect.

I am confident that this Congress on the "European Dimension of Vocational Training – Experiences and Tasks" will meet the high expectations which have been placed in it. I wish the Congress every success.

Introduction

Achilleas Mitsos
Task Force Human Resources, Education, Training
and Youth, Commission of the European Union

Mr Minister, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me first apologize for the fact that Professor Ruberti cannot be with us today. I can assure you that he much regrets not being here and his absence is due solely to short-term changes to the agenda of the European Parliament – you will understand that we at the Commission have to be very watchful on such occasions. Nonetheless I will try to present to you some of the thoughts that Professor Ruberti would have liked to discuss, undoubtedly not as well as he would have done, but I'll do my best.

Now, even doing my best when I have to follow Minister Laermann is very difficult because, Mr. Minister, you simply said it all. I can only subscribe fully from the Commission's viewpoint to the comments you made on the importance of the Community programmes, on the complementarity between LEONARDO and the Social Fund programmes or Community initiatives in this field and, obviously, on the ambitions of the German presidency to come up with resolutions on the quality and attractiveness of vocational training and on education and training research and statistics. We at the Commission, as I'm sure you know Minister, are trying very hard to help the German presidency in these areas because we share your view on their importance.

That by way of introduction. Let me now try to contribute to the discussions which will take place during this Congress by drawing attention to two aspects which might be helpful in pointing us in the right direction for the future. First, the transnational dimension of vocational training, an aspect highlighted by the title of this Congress, and secondly the concept of lifelong learning, which is a major focus of the Commission's preoccupations.

One can perceive the European dimension of vocational training as a concept, as a partly achieved reality and as an objective for the future. In this field, as in so many others, several years of discussion and initiatives have given us a general

outline of the situation in Europe. The instruments chosen for developing and making best use of the European dimension here are the European Union's education and training programmes. All of you are familiar with these programmes and many of you are involved in their implementation. The European dimension is visible at several levels but is rooted in two fundamental features of the European context: Europe's unity and its diversity. Let us look first at the unity aspect. The creation of a single market – and sometimes we tend to forget this major achievement whereby goods, services, people, knowledge, technology and ideas can circulate and be exchanged freely – represents an expansion of economic, scientific and social life which is presenting public administrations and businesses in the Member States with a whole new series of challenges: new markets to understand and conquer, new partners to communicate with, new languages to learn, and European regulations and standards to be assimilated. All these factors call for special abilities which form the basis of a truly European training. The other fundamental feature of the European context is diversity. From several viewpoints people tend to see diversity as a weakness, arguing that the partitioning of systems and sectors and the lack of recognition of qualifications and competences, for example, are obstacles on the path towards European integration. Responding to this claim we must concede that there is not yet a real European dimension in vocational training. But we must also point out that the existing diversity is a tremendous source of wealth providing our continent with decisive advantages over other parts of the world. The exchange of knowledge and experience, the cross-fertilization of know-how and traditions, the combination of all our best achievements – these are and will continue to be powerful weapons in our struggle to adjust to changing circumstances. This struggle is one which involves social systems, living systems, and those best equipped to cope with change are those who have managed to maintain diversity. We therefore appreciate the diversity of vocational training systems and arrangements existing within the Union. Harmonization of laws and regulations here – assuming for a moment that this were not excluded by the Treaty – would not bring us a single step closer to achieving a European dimension in education and training. I wish to stress this point because I know that some people still believe that the EU Commission should strive for harmonization. This is not at all the case. On the contrary, diversity, together with subsidiarity, has been recognized as the key to developing the Community's vocational training policy.

Achilleas Mitsos

But we must have clear objectives for the future of Europe, and subsidiarity should not be used as an instrument to block European integration in this field. Furthermore, we should all be aware that subsidiarity is a principle valid not only between the European and the national level but also at other levels too. The appropriate level for handling training programmes, for example, might be the regional or local level, depending on administrative or economic needs and competences. Subsidiarity also means taking over responsibility at different levels in different fields. This approach could lead to a commonly agreed convergence of national systems and practices in response to common problems in economic and social development in Europe.

All those who have been involved in the FORCE, PETRA, COMETT, or EUROTECNET programmes are familiar with this European dimension of vocational training. The partnerships and networks which have been set up are now reaping the benefits from the programmes. What has been built up is a legacy of experience, knowledge and links which can now serve as a basis for more systematic measures on a larger scale. The future, we believe, lies in the LEONARDO programme, and our German friends are our most supportive allies in this belief. We hope that by the end of this year the remaining problems will have been smoothed out and the

Council will have taken its decision so that implementation of LEONARDO can start on 1st January 1995. We at the Commission also hope that, one way or another, we will end up with a budget somewhat larger than currently envisaged, but this is not a matter of immediate concern here.

As you are all familiar with the broad outlines of the LEONARDO programme I will not spend time discussing these but concentrate instead on two points to which I would like to draw particular attention. The first is the rich variety of procedures and mechanisms available for implementing the programme. For some, this variety is a little too rich, but I think it is important to realize that it means that businesses, professional groupings, private bodies, social partners will all be able to propose projects directly to the Commission. At the same time, Member State governments will be more closely involved in the drawing up and implementation of projects with a direct bearing on national education systems and in the choice of projects. This should result in generalizable problem solutions which warrant being applied elsewhere. The second point is the balance we have managed to achieve. Already a deliberate feature of the Commission's proposal, this balance was maintained and even strengthened during the Council discussions which took place during the first semester of this year. This is reflected clearly in the Common Position document. The balance struck is first of all a balance between previous activities and new activities. We considered it essential that all previous Community achievements be upheld. This has been done by ensuring that measures which proved their worth in the previous programmes are followed up and further developed under the LEONARDO programme. Balance was also sought, secondly, between initial training and continuing training. In line with the aim of promoting lifelong learning set out in the Commision's White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment, LEONARDO seeks to ensure a continuum between initial and continuing vocational training. Such a continuum is admittedly easier to describe than to achieve, and although a whole range of institutional barriers still block the path ahead, we believe that the measures of the LEONARDO programme will go a long way towards removing those barriers and raising awareness of the issues at stake.

This second balance between initial and continuing training leads me directly to the other main issue I would like to mention: lifelong learning. The concept of lifelong learning has become a leitmotiv which has been present in all the discussions on education and training of the past few years. It is outlined in the Commission's White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment, and indeed a major

part of the White Paper is organized around this concept. Few documents argue so clearly and forcefully for lifelong learning, but much still remains to be discussed and clarified with regard to its implementation. The idea of lifelong learning marks a real revolution in our conception of education and training, the relationship between training and work, and the relationship between knowledge and professional activity in the life of both the individual and society as a whole. The prevalent conception is still very much that of a clear progression involving an increasingly long period of initial training followed by a period of employment during which the knowledge and skills previously acquired are applied and perhaps updated. We must wean ourselves off this image. In a society based more and more on the production, transmission and application of knowledge and where the pace of technological and social innovation is becoming ever faster, the adaptation of knowledge cannot be a mere accessory to education and training. It must be at the very centre of our preoccupations. And at the very centre of this adaptation is the ability to learn how to learn, to acquire new knowledge, to assimilate new know-how and to adopt new models. Instead of being limited, as at present, to certain categories of the workforce or certain types of training, continuing training must have universal coverage and must become the norm, become reality – and this is one of the main messages of the White Paper. Universally practised continuing training must indeed become a genuine right. Although European countries have undeniably been making progress towards this goal for some time now, much yet remains to be done. Education and training systems have conventionally undergone mainly localized and sectoral adjustments rather than any overall structural reform. The principle of access to training for all may appear to be widely acknowledged, but it has not yet been translated into reality and obvious inequalities exist between different categories of the workforce and different companies. Awareness in the Member States of the issues at stake in continuing training is growing, but it is taking time to translate this awareness into action, and there is still a shortage of practical initiatives to take the process further. The approach to on-going training continues to be dominated by a rather narrow, work-related conception of the content of training, and people's minds have not yet adjusted to the idea of a continuum between education and training and between initial training and continuing training.

Once this shift in mindsets has been achieved and more practical measures begin to be taken, the positive effects should be felt at three levels. At the social level – without claiming that this would be a panacea for all ills – universal on-

going training, combined with other measures, can contribute to solving the chronic unemployment problem. Let there be no misunderstandings or misconceptions here: no-one claims that training alone is an immediate, a direct solution to the unemployment problem, but it can make a contribution towards solving that problem. At economic level, it can help Europe transform its assets in terms of human capital into progress, products and services. This is the key to true prosperity for a modern society. In his book „The Work of Nations", the economist Robert Reich, now US Secretary of Labour, expounds the theory that the true wealth of a nation lies in its human resources. Rather than going all out to conquer new market shares, the modern nation seeking economic success and responsibility on the world stage must pursue a firm policy of deploying human capital to best advantage and encourage its citizens to be more productive and more creative. In this connection Reich makes an energetic plea for an open education and training policy which is very similar to the one outlined in the Commission's White Paper. The reference here to creativity strikes me as being particularly important. In addition to having a social and economic impact, lifelong learning is also likely to modify and considerably enrich relations at work and in society generally. By creating unprecedented possibilities for varying activity and introducing innovation into the workplace, on-going training will help workers fulfil their personal goals and thus also has a genuine and profound psychological and cultural significance.

I realize that some of the thoughts I have shared with you will take time to secure general acceptance but I hope that they will be helpful for the discussions to take place during the Congress.

Workshop A

"The Bottom-Up Approach to Europe"

The aim of this workshop is to take a look at the form and content of projects which are based primarily on the initiative of chambers, companies, schools and other vocational training institutions and are designed to promote transnational cooperation in the area of initial and continuing vocational training. A key issue is the extent to which such activities not only provide solutions for those directly involved, but also represent potential models for vocational training at a broader European level. This gives rise to a fundamental question for European vocational training policy: what is the significance of non-state-coordinated initiatives for the future development of vocational training in the European Union and in what manner do national and European promotion programmes look upon such initiatives?

Workshop A 1

Euro-Regions – Transnational Cooperation in Border Areas

Introduction Paper

Dr Jochen Reuling (BIBB), Berlin

The focus of this first core topic is transnational cooperation in initial and continuing training along the internal borders of the European Union and the so-called Euro-regions. Who initiates and supports such cooperation? What are the origins, goals and results, especially with regard to training in the context of a transnational, regional labour market? To what extent are traditional national training programmes no longer fulfilling present-day needs? Are models for the further process of integration within the EU being developed at the Euro-region level?

The question of cooperation in border areas touches on a wide array of issues:

Bolstering communication abilities and fostering reciprocal familiarization and understanding among European neighbours

Prerequisites for all transfrontier training are the promotion of language skills as well as the ability and willingness to demonstrate openness to other people, traditions and cultures. This includes the elimination of prejudice by means of mutual familiarization and understanding and applies to teachers, initial and continuing training instructors, and the trainees themselves.

- Are geographic proximity and existing informal contacts a sufficient basis for effective linguistic communication and for the comprehension of the other nation's traditions and culture as well as its diverging rules, procedures and practises in the individual occupational areas? What kind of new approaches and programmes have been developed for the various target groups (teachers,

initial and continuing training instructors, trainees), and what kind of insights have been gained?

- With an eye to successful transnational training, should intensive preparatory programmes be designed to enhance language skills and to promote an understanding of one's European neighbour be carried out in advance and/or can such goals be achieved more effectively through intensive efforts accompanying the specific training measures?
- To what extent is transnational training hindered by communication problems or obstacles to mutual understanding caused by dissimilarities among neighbours? Can such impediments be overcome by means of concrete training measures?

Promotion of the occupational and geographic flexibility and mobility of trainees and workers

A central objective of cooperation in border areas is to train future employees as well as persons currently employed or out of work in order to give them new and expanded job opportunities and thereby contribute to the development of the border area. Given the variance among vocational training systems, transnational transparency and the recognition of professional qualifications are of major importance for initial and continuing vocational training. The same can be said of training programmes designed to supplement national schemes, carried out in the form of jointly developed curriculum blocks ("Euromodules"). Another aspect is to step up cooperation among labour officials so as to provide better occupational orientation and information on promotion possibilities in individual cases as well as to assist in the placement of candidates in initial and continuing vocational training programmes in the neighbouring country.

- Are there established practises in the border areas that ensure that initial and continuing training certificates are recognized transnationally? Is the absence of formal recognition of certificates a relevant obstacle to the transnational mobility of trainees and workers? Are certified qualifications acquired through professional experience and/or continuing training sufficient to get a job in the neighbouring country?
- Are individual training phases recognized in the neighbouring country and, if so, under what conditions?

- Which efforts are currently underway in border areas and what kind of insights have been gained with regard to the development of joint curriculum blocks or "Euromodules"? Are there typical economic or vocational areas or training focal points? What opportunities and limits have become evident through the implementation of such joint curricula in initial and continuing training (e.g. concerning the requisite teaching materials)? How and by whom does certification take place? To what extent do certificates meet with de facto recognition on the transnational labour market? Are the corresponding courses widely attended, and has it been established that they enhance the workforce's mobility in border areas?
- What are the scope, objectives, focal points and record of success of transnational cooperation among labour officials in border areas? Are there undertakings to develop transfrontier placement programmes? How might transnational cooperation among labour officials be improved?

The transnational exchange of ideas and concepts designed to promote innovative processes in training and on the job as well as to improve the quality of life in the region

The transnational transfer of innovative approaches is a central objective of numerous action programmes and Community initiatives of the European Union. Due to their geographic proximity and the associated favourable possibilities for cooperation, border areas are especially suitable for such activities.

- What kind of examples of successful innovation transfer regarding training and labour in border areas can be cited?
- To what extent have the corresponding results and insights been circulated? Could they serve as models for other border areas?
- What difficulties are encountered when engaging in innovation transfer in border areas?

The development of joint institutional structures to support appropriate measures

Cooperation in border areas requires the development of supporting institutional structures. This is definitely true for the long-term, and one might go so far as to consider it a prerequisite.

- What kind of supporting structures have been developed in border areas (e.g. joint informational and advisory centres, coordination offices for transfrontier activities)?
- Which decision-makers in the realm of vocational training and labour market policy, representatives of the two sides of industry, schools and companies have been involved?
- What kind of knowledge has been gained through experience, and what are the main problems? Are there proven, durable practises that could serve as models for other border areas as well as for European cooperation beyond those areas?

Case Studies

Transnational Cooperation in Vocational Training Along the Internal Borders of the European Union

Kurt Bang (Endress + Hauser), Maulburg

This is a German company which operates worldwide from headquarters in Maulburg (Germany) near the border with France and Switzerland. In addition to its Maulburg headquarters the company has regional subsidiaries in Cernay, France, and Reinach, Switzerland. To take account of its various business locations the company has developed a "regio-training" which provides for a transnational exchange scheme for trainees based in the regional subsidiaries. The exchange scheme operates with trainee communications electronics engineers and industrial engineers in Germany, trainee systems technology mechanics in France and trainee electronic engineers in Switzerland.

How does the "regio-training" function at Endress + Hauser? First of all the candidate trainee enters into a contract with the subsidiary closest to his place of residence. In Switzerland and Germany the training initially follows the conventional lines of the dual system, i.e. the trainee undergoes in-company training but also attends vocational school one or two days per week. In the second and third year, part of the training takes place abroad. As the training system in France involves full-time school-based vocational education for the first two years of

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training, the in-company training in another country has to be scheduled in the third year of training. The trainees are also given foreign language instruction throughout the entire period of training.

At the end of the training every successful trainee is awarded not only the relevant national certificate but also an additional certificate issued by:

- the chamber of commerce and industry (D),
- the vocational training office (CH),
- the chamber of commerce (F).

The training does not involve any additional expense for the trainee as the company meets travel expenses and overnight subsistence expenses.

The "regio-training" provides for a foundation course in the first year of training which complies with that prescribed by the national training regulations for the occupation concerned. German trainees in their second and third years of training spend two six-week periods per year in France and Switzerland for practical training and training in certain specialized aspects. The Swiss trainees in their second and third years have one six-week training period in France and two six-week training periods in Germany. The French trainees, whose training is the shortest (3 years as opposed to 3½ years in Germany and 4 years in Switzerland), only go abroad in their third year of training – six weeks in Switzerland and two periods of six weeks in Germany. The rest of the training is as prescribed by the national training regulations. Supervisory power regarding training conditions also rests with the competent national body.

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Endress + Hauser set up this training scheme because it was in its own interests to do so. No claim has been made for EU funding. The company makes use of the relevant authorities' willingness to work together on a transnational basis.

Bob Bierling (Streekschool Groningen), Netherlands
Horst Scheel (Vocational School II, Leer), Germany

This regio-training case study examines the cooperation between two vocational schools in the Dutch – East Frisian border area (Dollart area).

The primary aim of this project for the joint development of curriculum modules for instruction in new technologies in the motor vehicle sector is to upgrade the quality of training in the region.

The project involves:

- the convening of a binational working group of representatives of both schools,
- a preparatory language course,
- study of the training situation across the border,
- comparing and contrasting guidelines and curricula,
- joint development and testing of curriculum modules,
- joint selection and procurement of teaching media,
- exchange scheme for trainees.

The motivations underlying this joint initiative were a desire to know more about the "neighbours" and a need to solve a real problem, namely developing curricula for training for metalworking occupations after reforms of the traineeships for these occupations in both countries.

The border regions felt they had been left rather alone in solving this problem. By taking action together they were able to obtain funding from the EU for the equipment needed to carry out the project – taken individually, their own funds would not have been sufficient. Here again it can be seen that the existing national structures can indeed leave scope for pragmatic, transnational initiatives.

Panel Discussion

Transnational Training for a Frontier-Free Regional Labour Market. A Model for Europe?

Panelists

Kurt Bang (Endress + Hauser), Maulburg; Bob Bierling (Streekschool Groningen), Netherlands; Professor Werner Herrmann (Commission of the EU), Brussels; Arend Katterbach (Handwerkskammer Aachen); Rosemarie Schmachtenberg (Federal Ministry of Education and Science), Bonn; Horst Scheel (Berufsbildende Schule II, Leer), Germany; Dr Heinz Trzeciak (Ministry of Education and Sport of the Federal State of Saarland), Saarbrücken; Jens Vojta (German Employees Union DAG), Hamburg

Moderator

Ferdel Schröder (Special Commissioner of the Minister of Education, Youth and Culture of the German-speaking community of Belgium), Eupen

Rapporteurs

Kurt Kielwein, Heinrich Tillmann (BIBB), Berlin

The discussion on the case studies showed that difficulties in cross-border cooperation within the EU, e.g. language and cultural barriers, different legal systems, can be more rapidly and more easily overcome in the border regions. Cultural affinity, greater ease in communication, interest in fostering good neighbourly relations, comparable problem situations in geographically close regions and the possibility of exchanging information rapidly are all factors which offer prospects of finding pragmatic problem solutions on a basis of neighbourly cooperation.

The question of certifying qualifications is less preponderant in border regions than at national level because of the relative ease in communicating. Different legal systems seem to be the greatest obstacles to cross-border cooperation. For example, five different insurance policies – legal expenses, personal liability, travel, accident and medical care – had to be taken out for each individual student taking part in a student exchange scheme between Saarland and Lorraine.

Further problems arise when different policy fields are involved, in particular education and training policy on the one hand and labour market policy on the other. The eligibility criteria for some European programmes and initiatives are predominantly geared to integrating unemployed youngsters or adults into the labour

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market on the basis of short-term transnational training schemes. Others give priority to developing joint curriculum modules within the framework of regular school-based and/or in-company vocational training.

The companies engaged in cross-border cooperation were able to be more flexible in responding to new needs than schools or other public-sector agencies. It was emphasized that the experience already gained from transnational cooperation initiatives could offer a basis for exposing conceptual inconsistencies in European promotion programmes and raising their goal attainment levels in future.

Because of their generally positive experience, the initiators of the training models presented expressed their hope that other companies, schools or other institutions would make a commitment to transnational cooperation – if only in their own interest. Such commitments would be helpful in ensuring that such models could be continued and new concepts developed. The response from the young people concerned is certainly very positive.

The ensuing discussion focused on the following aspects:

- EU support for transnational cooperation projects in the field of initial and continuing training in border regions;
- mutual recognition of qualifications;
- facilitating the spread of transnational initial and continuing training models.

When does the EU support transnational cooperation projects in the field of initial and continuing training in border regions?

Under the provisions of the Treaties of Maastricht, the EU takes action in the field of vocational training only when such action is in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. The EU proceeds from the assumption that the Member States will themselves contribute to European integration through their own initiatives and it will only intervene if the Member States' possibilities are inadequate. This might be the case, for example, if the costs incurred by a project exceed the amount which, by virtue of vested national interests and national commitments as an EU Member State, a country is required to fund. The EU also proceeds from the assumption that business enterprises have a natural interest in transnational activities as a means of safeguarding their markets. It takes the view that responsibility for the substance of initiatives rests first and foremost with the initiators of such initiatives. The EU does, however, acknowledge a responsibility for disseminating infor-

mation on novel projects which have developed on the basis of transnational cooperation because it seems that problems which are virtually unsolvable at national level are more amenable to being successfully tackled in border regions.

To sum up: cross-border cooperation projects in the field of initial and continuing training can undoubtedly be a decisive first step towards transnational understanding and the development of a reciprocal openness of mind vis-à-vis different traditions and cultures. Geographical proximity and cultural affinity play a major role in this respect.

Although communication problems also exist in border regions – and such problems should not be underestimated – pragmatism can help overcome them. In the industrial field, for example, technical drawings backed up by a crash language course can be a sound basis for effective communication. Another possibility often applied is to use English a lingua franca. And in some cases students of foreign languages are called in on a temporary basis to serve as moderators.

It was pointed out that there is already evidence that such local cooperation projects are having the desired more widespread impact. The demand for foreign language instruction, for example, increases as soon as such projects have demonstrated the practical benefits of being able to communicate in the language of the neighbouring country.

It was also stressed that support from the EU is more important in the vocational training sector than in any other sector of education and training. In the higher education sector, for example, the mutual recognition of qualifications is no longer a problem and exchange schemes have become part of the regular agenda (international knowledge society). In the vocational training sector, by contrast, experience with exchange schemes is still only limited. Different initial and continuing training systems, different qualifications and different legal systems are all obstacles to more intensive exchange activities. Support from the EU is indispensable in this sector.

The EU also intends to contribute towards a more integrative model for relations between technology policy, education and training policy, and employment policy. It wants to help remove the bureaucratic barriers which separate these field of policy-making. For example, this intention has been taken as an objective for the Interreg II programme (1994-1996) and the Youthstart programme within the framework of the Community initiative on employment. Here, transnational training places are to be set up with a view to promoting vocational training, occupational mobility and job security. But here again the underlying principle applies: the

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programme sets out the political idea but the ideas for implementing it have to come from regional initiators (chambers, schools, employers) and the resulting projects can then be cofinanced by the EU.

Mutual recognition of qualifications

Two issues which regularly crop up in connection with transnational cooperation projects are the third-party information value of a vocational training certificate and the mutual recognition of vocational qualifications. Here it was argued that it is less a matter of establishing equivalence between the various qualifications than – more importantly and realistically – of improving the third-party information value of the certificates. A person who does not have a detailed understanding of initial and continuing training systems can be greatly helped in assessing the value of a qualification if the certificate provides the necessary information. Transparency is required instead of equivalence. European directives could be helpful in this respect. Reference was made to an arrangement which was arrived at in connection with the reform of the training requirements for the occupation of marine mechanic. The social partners worked out a specimen certificate which is designed to meet the need for greater transparency.

Promoting the dissemination of transnational initial and continuing training models

The question about what could be done to ensure that successful transnational initial and continuing training models are emulated elsewhere elicited the following basic ideas:

- The EU does not want to intervene in existing national initial and continuing training systems unless a need for such intervention is reported by the Member State concerned. The EU does, however, want to promote innovations in vocational training throughout Europe.
- As shown by the case studies presented, initiatives in border regions are particularly suitable for expanding and intensifying transnational cooperation.
- Bottom-up strategies, not top-down strategies, are the more expedient as problems and needs are most clearly visible at local level.

- The EU should act here only with a view to complementing and strengthening national measures. Emphasis should be placed not on recognizing qualifications but instead on creating more transparency with regard to what a qualification entails.
- Too little is known about the various initial and continuing training models. Future EU support schemes must provide for the replication of co-funded projects. Although pragmatic action in border regions has achieved or can achieve results in terms of training for the workforce, the trade unions argue that this is not sufficient to meet workforce needs. Thinking and comparing on a European scale will not lead to progress if the systems remain unchanged. It is true that the European legal framework does not allow for harmonization but in the longer term an arrangement must be found which will satisfy the needs of the workforce.

Finally it was stressed that at this stage the most important thing is to generate ideas for suitable concepts which can be replicated elsewhere. Good examples must be set and thus the corresponding signals emitted. Competition will show which initial and continuing training systems have the greatest merits.

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Workshop A 2

Large Companies Elsewhere in Europe – Vocational Training Cooperation Within and Between Companies

Introduction Paper

Dr Richard Koch (BIBB), Berlin

Large companies not only try to locate markets for their products in other European countries, but also have production sites, subsidiaries and holdings there. In addition, there are Europe-wide networks of suppliers and distribution systems that are significantly influenced by the activities of large companies. The total number of persons employed directly or indirectly by large companies throughout Europe is very high indeed. Therefore, those companies are important players in the area of vocational training both domestically and abroad and have considerable influence on national and European vocational training policy.

When operating abroad, companies sometimes find themselves confronted with significantly diverging basic conditions, including educational and vocational training systems that vary greatly from one country to another. This is an important factor influencing the skill pool of the national workforce which companies are obliged to draw on when recruiting the larger part of their staff. This situation generates a first group of questions for discussion:

Vocational training systems as a factor in the selection of a location for operations?

Modern production and organizational concepts currently suggest a trend towards the supra-national homogenization of training requirements in large-company operational processes. However, the skill structures of individual nations' workforces continue to vary significantly. To a great extent this can be attributed to differences in the "output" generated by national vocational training programmes.

- How do large companies operating transnationally or globally react to this situation? What significance do they attach to the national workforce's skill pool when selecting a site for their activities?
- To what extent do companies adapt their production and organizational concepts to workforce qualifications in the host country? Or: To what degree are they forced to create special training measures to compensate for qualification deficits with regard to the organizational concepts to be implemented?

In this context it is of interest to take a look at the experiences of certain large German companies abroad. Often in conjunction with other German firms and sometimes also with foreign companies or foreign chambers of commerce, they offer their own training courses that are oriented towards the German training occupations.

- Could these measures serve as models for the further development of foreign vocational training systems, or are they merely isolated solutions? How do companies in the host country react?

A *second* group of questions has to do with the need for transnational cooperation between domestic and foreign company branches:

What new training requirements arise from transnational professional cooperation and transnational mobility within companies?

The fact that there are often tight interlinkages between domestic and foreign parts of a company lends special importance to transnational cooperation among the staff. It can also mean that there is an increased need for transnational mobility within the firm.

- Which staff groups are most likely to be subject to in-company transnational mobility?
- Are there trends pointing towards the development of an in-company European labour market?
- What training measures do companies undertake in order to develop the linguistic and technical qualifications requisite for transnational cooperation and mobility? Are the corresponding preparatory steps taken at the training stage, e.g. through training phases in foreign-based company branches?

- What interest do large firms have in European qualification standards and training certificates for occupations in which the training requirements are similar across Europe?
- What kind of a contribution do companies expect from European promotion programmes in vocational training with regard to the further development of national vocational training systems and the promotion of Europe-related training concepts?

A *third* group of questions has to do with the training policies established by large companies operating transnationally against the backdrop of their competitive positions on the European market:

National or European training concepts?

The training of staff in connection with new products, production concepts or sales strategies is a crucial instrument in ensuring competitiveness. The development and implementation of corresponding training and personnel development concepts can require considerable expenditures.

- Is there a transnational transfer of corresponding concepts and proven practises within firms or even an inner-company European training policy?
- Could large firms operating throughout Europe become a point of departure for European innovations in initial and continuing vocational training that are also of relevance beyond the company level?
- Are there efforts underway intended to foster branch-specific cooperation between firms?

Case Studies

Hanne Sampson (German-British Chamber
of Industry and Commerce), London

The British-German School, London

Why do German companies send their trainees to the British-German School in London for training?

The British-German School for Vocational Training is an institution run under the auspices of the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce in London and the only German vocational school in Great Britain. Its main function is to provide training for industrial and bank clerks in the dual system for British and German firms. The school also works in close cooperation with various employers, vocational schools and chambers of industry and commerce in Germany to stage continuing training courses in the commercial sector for trainees and other young people who have already completed a traineeship. Participants in these courses come from very varied job backgrounds and age groups and have very varied interests.

Many member companies have already had positive experience with the dual system because it combines theory and practice in vocational training. Following the custom in Germany, trainees pass through various departments during the course of their training, giving them an opportunity to gain both general commercial knowledge and experience of specific areas. This practical experience is supplemented by theoretical instruction. Trainees gain an understanding of all the circumstances relating to a business, including the theoretical background. The training they receive makes them flexible and opens up a variety of job options to them. This has clear advantages both for the employer and for the trainees themselves, who emerge with greater interest in their chosen job field and are motivated to become active team members.

In recent years German employers have increasingly recognized the benefits of employing staff with experience of working abroad. Linguistic and technical proficiency combined with an extended period of study and/or practical work abroad pays dividends. With the growing number of mergers of European firms and increasing cooperation at international level, there is a growing need for staff with international experience.

Why do Siemens, the Deutsche Bank and other notable German companies send trainees from their English subsidiaries to the British-German School?

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to explain something of the English vocational training system. A uniform training system on the lines of the dual system in Germany has only been up and running in England for a short time and is still in the developmental stage. For the most part, young recruits continue to receive all their training in technical schools and few take part in a well thought-out and developed on-the-job training programme. The result is that much of the training provided is one-sided, skewed either to theory or practice.

The member firms of the British-German School look for a mix of both since they find it difficult to make full use of young people who have either purely theoretical or purely practical skills. Companies realized that it was more effective and cost-efficient to undertake the theoretical part of the training on a joint basis. To meet this need, the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Great Britain founded the British-German School in 1988, with the cooperation of various English and German companies. While providing training for the staff of the member companies according to the dual system, the school ensures that the training system is adapted to the English market. It was agreed at the outset that trainees would receive instruction in German to improve their knowledge of the language and would be given an insight into the European business world.

The British-German School trains banking and industrial clerks for its partner companies in a training programme lasting up to two years. Trainees study either in blocks or for one day a week. At the end of the course, they receive an English BTEC certificate and the German dual vocational training qualification.

The programmes run by the British-German School offer member companies and trainees the following advantages:

- Forward-looking training content which is prepared on the basis of regular consultations with employers and is flexible enough to adapt rapidly to the training requirements of the member firms.
- Regular course development workshops with the employers ensure that the teaching is tailored to the requirements of the member firms. This means that the school is an effective partner in company training programmes. The success of this concept is self-evident: 90 % of the trainees stay with their training company because of the good earning potential and promotion prospects available to versatile, flexible staff with good technical and practical skills and the opportunity for continuing on-the-job training. Ultimately the companies also benefit from good training, since their competitiveness is determined largely by the level of skills of their workforce.
- The British-German School offers a real alternative to university. The training is regarded as neither wasted time nor a springboard to subsequent university entrance but as the starting point for a professional career. In other words, the school is a bridge spanning the gap between vocational training and university. Trainees are not lost to their companies after their period of training because alongside their work, the trainees can study part-time for two to three years for a university degree (e.g. BA Honours Degree in Business Administration at the University of East London).

Why do German companies send their trainees to the British-German School in London to take a continuing education course there?

While the dual system in Germany continues to represent a sound basis for training in terms of international competitiveness, even in Germany vocational training has lost some of its appeal for many people. Increasingly young people strive for a university place in the hope that a university qualification will bring them higher earnings and greater social prestige.

Employers who send their staff on continuing education courses at the British-German School recognize that they have to promote the attractiveness of the dual system. A continuing training course can demonstrate that the qualification received is a jumping-off point for further professional advancement. The aim is to

make German trainees more appreciative of vocational training so that they are unwilling to swap a secure, well-paid job for an uncertain future after university.

The partner firms of the British-German School know that increasingly the European jobs market demands knowledge and experience which go beyond purely national requirements. They want to see an expansion of transnational cooperation in vocational training with a view to identifying common goals and finding solutions to problems. They regard the ability to communicate and get on with people from other cultures as a key qualification.

Many employers feel that the foundations for this lie not just in continuing education and training programmes but in initial training. Direct contact with the British business world allows trainees to reassess their prejudices and opinions and also to identify areas where there are similarities. The process helps to prepare future employees for the many different requirements of working life and play their part in making their companies more competitive.

Friedwald Bracht (Volkswagen AG), Kassel

Transnational transfer of training concepts at Volkswagen AG

The Volkswagen Group transfers the training strategy developed in Germany for use at its business locations in other countries. While efforts are made to align the training strategies of the international companies with each other, in the final analysis the management of the individual company itself is responsible for what happens on site. The training company which Volkswagen AG plans to set up will undoubtedly intensify international cooperation. Up until now help has always been forthcoming from Germany in the setting up and implementation of training measures abroad. To take the case of SEAT as an example, a new factory in Spain received intensive advice on the promotion of adult education and training. Other locations in Spain have received advice on the training of young people.

Collaboration with SEAT resulted in the development of a staff development system which created a framework for job-related training in the technical and extra-technical sphere which is now used in virtually identical fashion at all the

Group's locations. Volkswagen AG prefers training strategies which are specific to the company as a whole but are at the same time adapted to the relevant cultural, historical and traditional background.

Manufacturing conditions are virtually identical at all Volkswagen locations. The senior executives in the company, in this case SEAT, are responsible for creating the conditions needed to improve the skills of the workforce. This practice is in line with Volkswagen management principles. Established at the beginning of the 1970s, these principles place ultimate responsibility for the training of employees in the Spanish works with the appropriate superiors rather than the education system, the personnel development department, or a department in Germany.

While circumstances in Spain naturally have to be taken into account, particularly the fact that Spain has a school-based vocational training system, the training goals in Spain are the same as those that apply in the German factories. Similarly, the extra-technical training requirements are those laid down in the German training regulations. The same principle also applies to other locations, e.g. Portugal or the Czech Republic. In terms of their structure, SEAT's training measures follow the basic pattern developed for the recent reorganization of traineeships for metalworking and electrical occupations in Germany. These measures are designed to give the trainees a broad basic qualification followed by a particular specialization. Once again the content of the practical training is broadly the same.

In dovetailing in-company training with the relevant national educational systems, the Group exploits whatever possibilities are to hand. It also, if the need arises, sets up its own institutions. In Brazil, for example, a kindergarten was set up and provision made for large segments of general education.

The plant supervisor team is an example illustrating how the requirements of modern manufacturing technologies are the same at all the locations. It is therefore important that they all have the same vocational qualifications. An employee can become a plant supervisor by completing a regular vocational training course which has been adapted to the company's specific requirements. In Germany an employee can satisfy this requirement by training as an industrial fitter or industrial electronics fitter in the field of production technology. Another possible option is to complete a very extensive programme of continuing adult vocational training. Staff of the companies in Bratislava or Spain examine appropriate programmes in Germany and adapt and/or improve them for their own use.

Ulrich Gruber (Höchst AG), Frankfurt am Main

Transnational transfer of training concepts at Höchst AG

When analysing education and training in Europe and the training of employees within companies, it is important to distinguish between the different levels. The activities involved in basic training are different from those in the continuing training of employees or of management staff. Höchst AG uses a centralized model for the continuing training of management staff but not for the initial and continuing training of the other two groups. It is part of the Höchst corporate philosophy that the respective national companies have complete responsibility for staff training within the framework of national conditions. No attempt is made to standardize national training systems. It is important to bear in mind, for instance, that not every country views the spending of very large sums on training young people in the same light as Germany.

An additional factor to be considered is that work is frequently organized along different lines in different countries. In the Höchst company in the USA, for example, maintenance work, which is the great pride of chemical companies in Germany, is contracted out to outside companies. Höchst in the USA does not therefore face the task of training industrial fitters and power electronics fitters. This is the responsibility of the firms who carry out the maintenance work.

For production staff, on the other hand, the situation is different. The German parent company sets an international standard for production in relation to such areas as work safety and environmental protection. In these areas it is therefore necessary to have overall training standards which apply throughout the group. The Höchst philosophy, however, requires the individual international companies to devise their own training concept and implement it in modular form.

The popularity of the module-based system in other countries is one possible reason for the lack of headway in exporting the German dual system. While personnel, training and even production staff from other countries who take a look at vocational training at Höchst in Germany regularly express great enthusiasm, they quickly forget about the system once they return home since it fails to fit into their local training structure. There are, however, exceptions. There was great surprise when the three great chemical companies (Höchst AG, Bayer AG and BASF) set up a joint training centre on German lines in Mexico.

There are various approaches open to major companies operating abroad within Europe in the field of vocational training. The British-German School model described is a very widespread model in Europe for training in the commercial field, but there is nothing comparable for the scientific or technical sectors.

Four years ago the Höchst parent company in Frankfurt started international classes to which the various European Höchst companies send selected young school-leavers (generally with A Levels or Abitur) to undergo regular training as industrial clerks. These young people trained according to the German model either return to their home country to take up a job there or remain in Frankfurt working in an international capacity. This represents a notable innovation for Höchst AG and is attributable to intensified European cooperation. Industrial clerks in particular also have the option of taking practical courses abroad. A growing number of employees take advantage of this option each year.

In the scientific field there are other exchange models. Höchst has an agreement with a French state school, for instance, which sends its students to a Hoechst company in Germany for six weeks for work experience. The students receive a certificate attesting to the skills they have acquired which is recognized in France. A similar project operates with a vocational college in Birmingham. These are not projects, however, which are run under the auspices of PETRA. PETRA promotes a project for the continuing training of middle management in a Portuguese subsidiary in which Portuguese master craftsmen or instructors are taught to train young Portuguese employees in such subjects as environmental protection or the handling of new technologies.

Unchanged in the field of cooperation in vocational training is the fact that many activities have to be initiated and implemented by the private sector and/or companies. Because of the different historical and cultural developments in the various countries, however, these schemes continually run up against barriers. This is one reason why Höchst AG does not attempt to enforce harmonization, particularly since it is not an urgent necessity.

Panel Discussion

Large Companies: A Source of Vocational Training Innovations of European Relevance?

Panelists

Friedwald Bracht (Volkswagen AG), Kassel; Ulrich Gruber (Höchst AG), Frankfurt am Main; Gerhard Prager (Austrian Trades Union Confederation - ÖGB), Vienna; Hanne Sampson (German-British Chamber of Industry and Commerce), London

Moderator

Dr Ilka von Braun (Bayer AG), Leverkusen

Rapporteurs

Henning Bau, Harald Brandes, Dr Jochen Reuling (BIBB), Berlin and Bonn

The discussion concentrated on the following aspects:

- What groups of employees are most likely to be involved in in-company transnational mobility? Are there indications of an in-company European jobs market?
- What contribution do the major companies require from European promotion programmes in the field of vocational training?
- What role are major companies playing in the development of European training concepts?

What groups of employees are most likely to be involved in in-company transnational mobility? Are there indications of an in-company jobs market?

The representatives from the major German companies all stressed that transnational mobility is geared exclusively to certain groups of employees within the companies, in particular senior management, to a lesser extent middle management, and certain specialists. For members of top and middle management, an assignment abroad is part of their career development. The same applies in reverse to members of foreign subsidiaries who come to Germany for a period. According to the Volkswagen representative, transnational mobility is not a factor which

affects technical staff. The more common practice is for foreign technical staff to receive training or a further qualification in the German plants.

The Höchst representative, however, felt that despite this clear trend, companies needed to give more thought internally to the possibility of promoting "European thinking" in young people by creating more job opportunities abroad. He argued that the benefit for companies was that young people who had come into contact with different cultures were much more open to new developments and showed themselves to be far more flexible in new contexts than those who had never been abroad. There was absolutely no doubt that young people were very interested in receiving training in other European countries; many German companies were reported to be loath to give too much publicity to schemes such as the British-German School in London for fear of receiving too many applications.

What contribution do the major companies require from European promotion programmes in the field of vocational training?

One point of interest raised here was that, for a variety of reasons, major German companies seek relatively little funding for their transnational initial and continuing training programmes from European promotion programmes. Apart from the fact that many companies regard the expense of administering such funds as excessive, there was often a difference of opinion between the individual companies and the TASK FORCE with regard to cooperation partners. While the major companies selected potential partner countries on the basis of their own internal requirements, the TASK FORCE naturally applied political criteria to its promotion measures – the need, for example, to ensure the participation of a balance of partner companies from Target 1 countries. Ultimately major companies required less in the way of public grants for training innovations than small or medium-size companies. This could well change in the future.

Representatives of the major companies expressed general regret at the relatively low level of participation of their companies in the European promotion programmes since they regarded the big companies as catalysts for innovative training strategies. In this context the representative of BAYER AG urged that Brussels be asked to make a "positive" approach to the major companies and to design the promotion programmes in such a way that they are seen as an invitation to take part. The EUROPEAN COMMISSION representative conceded that there was perhaps some justification in the criticisms levelled by the major companies at the

PETRA programme, but clarified that such criticism could not be applied to the FORCE programme or the future LEONARDO programme. He insisted that the Commission firmly believed that there could be and should be a process of innovation transfer, and that this transfer was actually taking place. It was for this reason that the Commission promoted cooperation between large companies. He said that the Commission used the FORCE programme to promote innovation transfer on a specifically sectoral basis in the continuing training field since this was in line with the demands of companies in a variety of sectors. In criticism of the Volkswagen AG representative, he pointed to the fact that typically major companies attached little value to innovation transfer, preferring instead to pursue their own company-centred training strategies. This had the effect of hindering mobility, the promotion of which was one of the goals of the programmes. This criticism was not left unchallenged by the company representatives, who proceeded to discuss the following question in more general terms:

What role are the major companies playing in the development of European training concepts?

The representatives of the major companies argued that it was natural for their training departments to be guided in their training efforts by company requirements; however, they warned against defining this demand too narrowly since it was a parameter which could not be accurately planned. In-house training strategies, they stated, were conceived on a broader basis to take account of new developments. The more important issue, according to the representatives, was the (-unplanned) repercussions of the development and implementation of training strategies and concepts devised by the major companies on a specific industry or region. They argued that innovation and know-how transfer were frequently a by-product, caused in the first place by the process of trainees leaving a company and taking their know-how with them. In the second place it resulted from the training of trainers from other companies. Thus they insisted that the term "company-specific" in relation to training strategies should not be understood too narrowly.

The representative of the Austrian Trades Union Confederation also pointed to the innovative force of major companies in the training field. While he admitted that in terms of quantity it was difficult to regard big companies as germ cells of European or even national innovations, the same did not apply to the quality of the training provision. He felt that the major companies had been successful in

developing solutions in the important field of new technologies and that in Austria at least, these solutions were regarded as extraordinarily important. He called for this innovative quality to be maintained in the future, a demand which touched on the whole question of the funding of the dual system.

The representatives of the major German companies all agreed that they made other important contributions to European development, even if these tended to be more pragmatic than strategic. One example was the British-German School in London, which was described in some detail. They pointed to other, similar models of cooperation in the field of commercial training involving German companies in France, Spain and Portugal. They stated that these models were "exported" from Germany since the parent companies in Germany were convinced that new staff in their subsidiaries abroad could also benefit from dual-type training, and that models gradually gained a foothold in the foreign vocational training systems. They described how this process resulted in the other European countries in a type of double qualification and suggested that this might represent a way forward in the direction of Euro-qualifications.

Speakers also pointed to the exchange of experiences with regard to training problems and problem-solving strategies in particular industries as a contribution to the development of European training concepts. The Volkswagen representative stated that national and international cooperation in questions of training development and workforce training was common in the automobile industry even between market competitors. The Höchst representative, on the other hand, reported that such industry-wide cooperation was not a feature of the chemical industry and that each of the major companies pursued their own individual strategies at home and abroad. Yet all these companies, it was pointed out, faced the same situation in that they were all geared to the same three markets: the United States, Asia and Europe. In future, therefore, it would not be a matter of marketing, production and logistics geared to Germany but European marketing and European logistics. It was argued that companies were currently in the process of adjusting to these requirements, a process which would also involve training employees to become increasingly Europe-oriented, and that these developments would inevitably foster a way of thinking which took account of the European dimension and lead to standardized training concepts for certain categories of the workforce.

Workshop A 3

The Relationship Between Local Initiatives and European Promotion Programmes

Introduction Paper

Dr Richard Koch (BIBB), Berlin

Accompanying the intensification of economic, ecological, social and cultural interlinkages between the Member States of the EU is a trend towards stepped-up transnational activities by a wide array of players in the area of vocational training. This gives rise to an increasing need for an exchange of experiences and for joint solutions to problems, something which is especially evident in border areas.

Local variety

Within the EU as a whole one can identify a great number of transnational contacts and activities, based on individual initiative (i.e. below the Union level), which have to do with initial and continuing vocational training. It can correctly be assumed that this is leading to the development of numerous innovative solutions that are applicable well beyond the realm of those directly involved.

- In what way can the various ideas and concepts being generated through transnational individual initiative be made more widely available, for example within the region or sector under consideration?

The transnational approaches to vocational training being developed through individual initiative generally have to do with solutions that are tailor-made to address specific problems and sometimes are designed to create individual competitive advantages. A central issue for national and European vocational training policy is

to establish how the various innovative ideas and concepts can be put to use for the further development of vocational training at the national and European levels.

National and European promotion programmes

The Member States have different traditions regarding state promotion of innovation. In Germany's dual vocational training system, the driving force for innovation is to be found primarily in certain committed companies and schools. State-promoted efforts to created model programmes are intended to help forge a link between individual commitment and national promotion priorities. One of the purposes of a highly developed system of vocational training research is to identify national promotion objectives and to lend scientific support to attempts to create model programmes. In other Member States, innovation is initiated primarily by the ministry of education. Up to now, the European dimension has played but a secondary role in national promotion concepts.

- How can national programmes for the promotion of innovation be given a more pronounced European orientation, and how could the scope of these programmes be expanded so as to be incorporated into transnational measures?

At the EU level, vocational training programmes (e.g. PETRA, FORCE) and Community initiatives of the European Social Fund in the area of human resources (e.g. EUROFORM, NOW) are to come up with Europe-related solutions and engender innovation in initial and continuing vocational training. Measures promoted by the EU must be fundamentally transnational in nature and should produce a "European multiplier effect" in comparison with purely national measures. National commitment to European objectives is guaranteed by means of national co-financing of European promotion programmes.

- Based on insights presently available, how might one describe the "European multiplier effect" of transnational measures in vocational training programmes in comparison with national measures? What is the best way to ensure that the results of transnational pilot projects are also applied at the national level?

- Is there a danger that the great variety of innovative ideas developed through vocational training practice could be channelled in an excessively rigid manner by the promotion priorities and selection procedures laid out in the European programmes?

Subsidiarity principle

When examining the relationship between regional, national and European levels, the so-called subsidiarity principle is of relevance. According to that principle, Community activities are to be limited to those cases in which the objectives of measures under consideration cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States and in which the scope and ramifications of those measures are such that it would be more appropriate to carry them out at Community level. As to the relationship between Member States and the Community with regard to vocational training measures, this principle is defined clearly in Article 127, Paragraph 1 of the EC Treaty: "The Community, in strict respect of the Member States' responsibility for contents and structure of vocational training programmes, conducts a vocational training policy that supports and supplements measures taken by the Member States." However, the Maastricht Treaty stipulates certain objectives and fields of activity that are to be addressed by the Member States as well, if necessary together with the Community. The purpose of the European Community, whose very foundation is formed by the cohesive cooperation of the Member States, can hardly be to promote a situation whereby the individual states continue to pursue policies that are utterly detached from European developments and are completely independent of one another. This also applies to vocational training and the Member States' responsibility to orient their developments and imperatives. The interdiction of the harmonization of Member States' legal and administrative regulations, addressed in Article 127, Paragraph 4 of the EC Treaty, does not rule out the convergence of national vocational training systems brought about by means of intensive cooperation and exchange in the absence of EU regulatory intervention.

- What is the relationship between national and European innovation needs, promotion priorities and measures?
- In the eyes of those responsible for vocational training, the two sides of industry, the Member States and the Commission, what is the benefit of European vocational training programmes?
- What respective role should the Commission and the Member States play in implementing the programmes?
- To what extent are the programmes to be considered an appropriate instrument in the Community's effort to foster the convergence of the Member States' vocational training systems by means of "bottom-up" initiatives?

Presentation

Helmut Brumhard (Kuratorium der Deutschen
Wirtschaft für Berufsbildung), Bonn

Decentralized Initiatives and European Promotion Programmes in the Light of the Subsidiarity Principle

As we pursue our great political goal of a living European Union and strive for the growing convergence of our societies and mutual economic success in the world market against the background of public sector budgetary restraints and the need to concentrate all available resources, it is essential for us, if we are to be successful, to reflect on the interrelationship of actions in particular areas, such as that of our topic today.

The training of the people in our countries is one, if not the central aspect of our future wellbeing. The Commission's White Paper on "Growth, Competition and Employment" therefore rightly allocates a central role to vocational training policy. Nevertheless, it would be wrong for the Commission to attempt to centralize this policy at Union level. Such a move would be contrary to the subsidiarity principle and would also be unfeasible with the available funds. The agreement on vocational training promotion in the LEONARDO programme is therefore correspondingly modest in its scope.

Decentralized initiatives and European promotion programmes together, on the other hand, are an excellent way of tackling the problem of making better use of human potential – one of our most important development resources.

I wish to formulate my comments on this topic under six theses:

Thesis 1: Vocational training projects effective at national level and for Europe as a whole must reinforce the foundations of the system. While pursuing the aim of contributing to European development, individual initiatives and Community programmes must be oriented to actual practice and geared to demand and requirements.

Traditionally our countries have very different education and training systems, some more shop floor-oriented, some more school-based. They constitute an important asset but their results are not easily transferable. The German system of initial and continuing vocational training is in a very special way the responsibility both of companies and also the individual.

Vocational training is thus part of corporate strategy and innovative approaches constitute a corporate goal. This presupposes that companies can devise and scale their training measures to meet their operational training requirements taking into account cost-benefit considerations.

The situation is quite different in countries in which vocational training depends essentially on the effectiveness of school-based provision. The difference is reflected in the areas and subject matter of the various initiatives and the ways of evaluating, transferring and promoting them. The basis of the subsidiarity principle is to capitalize on strengths instead of taking away national autonomy and influencing framework conditions.

It must at all times be clear and accepted that vocational training has to be incorporated into the economic context, the employment market situation and the overall background of the region. This applies in respect of the formulation both of general political objectives and of specific requirements. In the development of vocational training, direct practical experience involving not simply cross-border collaboration but also exchange of personnel is an important approach.

In order to reflect the different circumstances in the various countries, programmes must include a balanced proportion of measures to improve quality and to promote innovation in initial and continuing vocational training.

This is essential in order to be able to take adequate account of regional structural approaches – for example, special aspects in the promotion of small and medium-sized firms. It is also the only way to ensure that the many different facilities in our countries can develop freely and in line with specific requirements, and that promotional measures can perform efficiently.

Thesis 2: In order to give the many different in-company regional, national and European initiatives and promotion programmes a national or European relevance beyond their local benefit, it is essential to have overall national and European frameworks in place and to formulate appropriate targets for programmes.

The targeted and systematic promotion of vocational training in the European Union through decentralized initiatives and European programmes will only be possible, in my opinion, once the following conditions have been satisfied:

- at national level, framework conditions in laws or programmes which lay down the content, objectives and organization of vocational training and guarantee a secure institutional and financial basis;
- at EU level, the formulation of common objectives and guidelines for the development of vocational training in the European Union in the form of Council recommendations to both the Member States and the Commission which include an evaluation of current Community assets.
- Apart from this I see a need to formulate specific programme objectives in relation to the Council decision on the purview of programmes with binding effect on the Commission. This was a view successfully advanced by the German side in relation to the development of the LEONARDO Community programme.
- Finally it is vitally important for all those involved to share a common basic understanding of the importance and function of an initiative or programme and to define the main concepts – e.g. initial and continuing training – clearly.

Thesis 3: Providing added value to national and European vocational training through decentralized initiatives and European measures beyond a level adequate to the local situation can be achieved by reinforcing convergence in Europe in line with demand in order to move towards stated national and European vocational training goals.

European vocational training policy and promotion is successful where it is able to identify, promote and help transfer exemplary developments. "Exemplary"

means assisting local development and, over and above that, meeting national and European objectives.

With the knowledge already available it is possible to identify individual aspects benefiting Community development, mediate regional partnerships and at European level bring together expertise to solve particularly urgent problems, e.g. the problems affecting small and medium-size businesses, structurally weak regions or technological and economic change.

Experience shows that against this background free market forces come into play, the training sector expands, private providers expand their involvement, products and services are exchanged in the educational sector as elsewhere, and the prospect of the benefits to be gained stimulates and boosts transnational and regional cooperation.

A special aspect which I do not propose to go into here is the area of learning foreign languages and that of so-called "Euro-qualifications", a term which I feel has yet to be clearly defined or identified.

Thesis 4: The appropriate involvement of the sectors participating in the development of vocational training has a crucial effect on the quality and acceptance of the planning, decision-making, implementation and evaluation processes in national initiatives and European programmes and therefore also on the ability of these measures to fulfil their objectives to the benefit of overall national and European development.

This observation refers not only to those who provide practical and academic expertise but to the governments which are responsible for implementing projects. It also applies particularly to the social partners. They, as the front-line initiators and providers responsible for vocational training, must have the opportunity to influence developments. Important decisions should be taken together with them and not merely after consultation with them.

In the consultations on the LEONARDO programme, the German side made the following recommendations on this basis which were broadly accepted:

- Responsibility for programme planning, implementation and evaluation must lie primarily with the Member States.
- The common framework must be defined by the Community in close cooperation with the Member States.
- Member States will be responsible for selecting projects, implementation and dissemination of findings.

The German social partners in particular continue to demand full and equal representation on the committees involved in the LEONARDO programme.

It is also important to ensure that those directly responsible for vocational training are also able to share responsibility for the programme, not just in relation to programme control but also in areas of implementation. The Kuratorium der Deutschen Wirtschaft für Berufsbildung, for example, which is the vocational training agency of German employers, has applied to the ministry responsible to be national coordinator of the LEONARDO programme and is prepared to work together with the trade union side in this respect.

This is the only way to ensure that administrative structures are rationalized, implementation is decentralized and projects are geared as closely as possible to target groups and local needs.

Thesis 5: The subsidiarity principle stipulates that the European Union has only a supporting and contributory role to play in deciding the content and structure of vocational training; prime responsibility for European vocational training rests with the Member States. I believe that the Member States for their part have a duty within the programmes to help to incorporate the European dimension within the company, regional and national setting as demand dictates.

The regulations call not for European harmonization but for a strengthening of the Member States. Centralized action is still required, however, in relation to creating common frameworks, orienting national and European initiatives and programmes along the same lines and ensuring the effective concentration of promotion activities. It is also necessary in the process of dovetailing general and vocational training initiatives with other areas of activity in the Community – particularly in relation to the major funds – in order to create transparency, efficiency and beneficial synergetic effects.

I believe that each Member State has an obligation to Community policy on vocational training which requires it not only to make a political contribution towards preparing the ground for Community programmes but furthermore during implementation, to identify common European approaches and to evaluate and document their importance.

European cooperation in the field of vocational training should accordingly be guided by the following objectives:

- to place constructive cooperation on a partnership basis higher on the agenda than discussions on legal frameworks,
- to reinforce the process of learning from each other,
- to attach greater importance to practitioners than to politicians in vocational training,
- to reinforce the exchange of information and experiences in relation to good ideas and practices,
- to disseminate recommended concepts, methods and procedures efficiently,
- to broaden the application of transnational projects,
- to make national vocational training situations more receptive to European aspects and dimensions.

Thesis 6: Exemplary initiatives and programmes can have only a limited impact on their own. Only the existence of effective instruments to identify and register them, disseminate information about them and incorporate them into an overall framework will ensure that these projects achieve broader national or European resonance.

I wish to highlight three approaches which appear particularly promising to me:

- As the European institution with experience and expertise in vocational training, set up for the purposes of its development, CEDEFOP, which is at present still in Berlin, has an important and diverse role to play in research coordination, information, documentation and provision of services. Efforts should be made to involve CEDEFOP more directly in individual initiatives and programmes and to make more consistent use of its work as a central institution.
- A reporting network should be established in Europe, and programme reports in this connection should be filed to standardized national reporting systems. In addition to official government reports submitted periodically, I feel it would be particularly valuable in terms of development to have reports from independent experts who are able to make comparative assessments of the individual measures and their importance.
- CEDEFOP should be enabled to make available current basic information for such reports, for instance national statistics and analyses.

Panel Discussion

Promoting Quality and Innovation in European Vocational Training: The Roles of Decentralized Initiatives and European Promotion Programmes

Panelists

Maria H. André (ETUC) Brussels; Dr Thomas Bender (Task Force, Commission of the EU), Brussels; Helmut Brumhard (Kuratorium der Deutschen Wirtschaft für Berufsbildung), Bonn; Dr Hermann Müller-Solger (Federal Ministry of Education and Science), Bonn; Peter de Roij, Brussels

Moderator

Claude Bapst (Racine), Paris

Rapporteurs

Dr Agnes Dietzen, Bent Paulsen (BIBB), Berlin

The discussion on promoting quality and innovation in Community programmes centred on the following questions:

- Are Community programmes accessible to a broad group of players in the vocational training sphere, including companies? What are the reasons for non-participation?
- How can European innovations in vocational training be identified and developed further?
- What is the importance of know-how transfer in Community programmes and what successful transfer and dissemination strategies have been developed to date?

Access to European Community programmes in the vocational training sphere

The view was expressed that criticism was often levelled at Community vocational training programmes for being accessible to only a small group of players. In order to take part in EU programmes, it was pointed out that applicants have to satisfy demanding criteria and undergo selection procedures that go far beyond the requirements of national promotion programmes. This makes it difficult or impossible for smaller training providers, initiatives and companies to participate in the

programmes. There was a critical discussion on whether the priorities of the programmes were focused too narrowly, failing to reflect the multiplicity of available ideas and initiatives.

Positive mention was made of the role of national coordination centres and support structures which inform, advise and support applicants during the application and implementation stages of projects, and are particularly helpful in the establishment of transnational partnerships. The most common reason for turning down a project was reported to be its failure to meet the promotion and quality criteria of the programmes rather than any administrative hurdles. The promotion criteria applied by EU programmes reflect ambitious goals. They specify the promotion of projects which, as demanded in Thesis 1 of the introductory presentation, "make effective practical contributions to strengthening companies and improving the qualifications of employees in line with demand and requirements." The criteria are designed to ensure that projects qualifying for promotion not only offer solutions to individual problems, but also, because of their transnational orientation, identify ways of further developing vocational training in Europe. Cooperative projects are therefore expected to demonstrate commitment to the medium and longer-term institutionalization of transnational cooperation.

There are three main framework conditions which therefore govern the promotion and selection of individual projects:

- Applications always considerably exceed the resources available. Projects are therefore selected not merely according to whether they fulfil all the formal promotion criteria, but also on the basis of quality considerations.
- In the light of transnational cooperation, priority is given to cooperation models which are designed in terms of their content and organization to establish, strengthen and expand European cooperation rather than to narrow approaches.
- The high quality required of projects is better judged nationally since quality standards applicable at national level may not be applicable in a broad European context. Decisions on the transnational character of projects should be taken at European level.

The following general rule was offered in relation to projects eligible for promotion: "Concentrate on securing the best possible quality in terms of national competition and in the European context do all that is possible to achieve European objectives."

Identifying and promoting innovative potential

Promotion of innovation, the creation of *transparency* at sectoral, national and European level and the *subsidiarity* of *pilot projects* vis-à-vis national promotional priorities were identified as important aims. The core of the discussion focused on the strategy to be followed to achieve an "organized promotion of innovation" at European level in order to create transparency of vocational training practice and quality criteria between the Member States and to put into effect the subsidiarity principle.

There are various traditions of government promotion of innovation within the EU Member States. In Germany it was reported that an "organized form of innovation promotion" has been running for twenty years in the form of promotion for pilot projects. Initiators of pilot projects in Germany tend to be experienced vocational training practitioners, i.e. committed companies and schools. Applicants are required to explain the idea behind their innovation, the practical benefit to be gained from the project, and how the results of the project can be applied to vocational training practice elsewhere. Accompanying research is carried out to identify innovative potential in terms of national promotional priorities and to subject the projects to scientific assessment. The purpose of this procedure is to promote innovative potential and "initiative from below" and incorporate it into the ongoing development of vocational training in Germany. At present the European dimension in these projects remains of secondary importance.

The central issue discussed was whether this pilot project approach could become a strategy to promote innovation at European level. It was stressed many times that the assessment of innovations, quality criteria and strategies for system development meant very different things in the various Member States since the disparities in the systems generally resulted in different assessment standards.

The representative of the Task Force Human Resources described two models of European innovation promotion in relation to European vocational training programmes. An example of the first model was the EUROTECNET network; the network covers projects promoted at national level which are involved in a European information exchange. The purpose of the exchange is to open up national innovation priorities to European objectives. The work of the network is financed via the EU Commission. The second model described by the representative of TFHR was the approach to be used in the LEONARDO programme and the Community Initiatives in the field of human resources. Support will be provided for the development, running and propagation of transnational pilot projects which from their

Maria H. André (ETUC), Brussels

inception pursue European objectives and tackle problems which require a European approach. Areas particularly suited to this approach are those in which there is a need for transnational control and action, e.g. environmental problems or the introduction of new technologies. The quality of the transnational cooperation will be demonstrated if the project partners can progress beyond establishing an exchange of information and experience to introduce a division of work in project planning and implementation and/or produce joint products (e.g. teaching media, etc). This second approach presupposes an understanding of what can be classified as European objectives and innovations. The speaker continued by affirming that the two-stage decision-making process already in use in the PETRA and FORCE programmes had proved its worth. Nationally projects are assessed in terms of whether they meet national quality standards and whether they address issues which are important from a national perspective. Ultimately if a project is to be promoted by the Commission the significant question is to what extent transnational cooperation contributes to solving a European problem, in other words whether any "value added" can be achieved for Europe.

Several speakers stressed that for this reason, the promotion of an "initiative from below" required an agreement on common objectives at European level, in other words "from above". A realistic aim at European level was seen as the identification of innovation and, building on this, the elaboration of common European lines of development for vocational training policy.

The importance of know-how transfer and the dissemination of findings and outputs

In addition to the goal of pressing forward a European policy on innovation, the transfer of "successful models" was described as an important and, at the same time, critical function of Community programmes. The central question posed therefore was: what are the framework conditions for innovation transfer? What possibilities have been tested?

There was a controversial discussion on whether, in the light of the disparities between vocational training systems, it was possible to develop comparable criteria to assess "successful models" at European level. If "models of best practice" could be interpreted differently according to the level of development of national vocational training systems, what could be taken as the starting point for a mutual transfer of know-how? These issues were seen as items for a "European discussion" on the content of continuing vocational training systems, quality criteria and vocational qualifications. The involvement of the social partners was regarded as a conditio sine qua non in this field of social dialogue.

It was felt that synergy between the projects involved in the Community Initiatives and LEONARDO could be exploited as a way of widening the testing, implementation and propagation of successful training projects. In view of the significantly higher level of resourcing of the Community Initiatives, it was suggested that there might well be possibilities of linking into the innovative approaches to be developed in LEONARDO or those already developed by its precursors, PETRA, FORCE and EUROTECNET. Another possibility to exploit the synergetic effect would be to dovetail LEONARDO activities and the Community Initiatives on either a parallel or consecutive basis. Projects relating to regular vocational training in LEONARDO and projects for the target groups of the Social Fund could, for example, be developed in parallel. A further possible option would be to establish a division of labour, with development activity being carried out in LEONARDO and testing of vocational training concepts in the Community Initiatives. Findings would be disseminated with a view to ensuring that innovations were incorporated both in

national mainstreams and in educational and structural policy measures at European level.

The transfer of know-how was also defined as including the dissemination of the practical results and products of projects. The coordination centres are in possession of numerous materials in this respect in the form of product catalogues, project compendiums, etc. Networks fulfil an important function as they can be used to disseminate the products and act as catalysts for experiences in transnational cooperation. The latter function was described as particularly useful for projects which are working for the first time at the European level.

There was consensus that transfer was not simply a matter of practical products and publications; it was also a matter of "involvement in the process". It was agreed that new approaches to training could not simply be transferred from one country to the next and put into action without those involved exchanging information about the different national conditions under which projects originate and possible applications. Innovation transfer was a process which relied on an understanding of concepts and ideas and the working out of common objectives by partners. The "value added" which resulted from this transnational *cooperation* for Europe was expressed in terms of increasing *professionalism* on the part of those involved, an improvement in the quality of the projects and, perhaps most importantly, a *raising of the skill levels* of the target groups in question.

Workshop B

"Training for Europe"

As the Member States of the European Union become more and more interlinked, especially with regard to their economies, social welfare systems and labour markets, the European dimension of vocational training takes on increasing importance. Transnational cooperation in the professional realm means that individuals must have additional, Europe-related training. There is a growing need for innovative vocational training approaches to Community-wide problems and challenges. A European professional training area is taking shape. Insights and results taken from relevant transnational pilot projects and national reform efforts are presented and discussed in this workshop. The exchange of views revolves around aspects of transnational innovation transfer as well as legal and financial questions concerning training phases abroad.

Workshop B 1

Occupation-Related Foreign Language Instruction

Introduction Paper

Brigitte Wolf (BIBB), Berlin

Increasing need for occupation-related foreign language skills

The free movement of labour, goods, services and capital within the Single European Market is accelerating structural change and reciprocal market penetration against the backdrop of a common economic and structural policy. Initial and continuing vocational training programmes are called upon to play a key role in this development; occupation-related foreign language skills are of central importance. These skills promote professional and interpersonal communication and are a prerequisite for both the mobility of individual workers in the European Union and for transnational business relations between companies.

The teaching of occupation-related foreign language skills varies greatly among the Member States of the European Union, and the institutions responsible for that instruction also differ.

Recent studies involving employed persons and companies in Germany with regard to the need for foreign language skills have arrived at diverging conclusions.

In a study carried out jointly by the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) and the Institute for Employment Research (IAB) of the Federal Employment Service (BA), 11.7 % of the 34,000 representatively selected employed persons stated that they needed foreign language skills in their jobs (BIBB/IAB-Erhebung 1991/1992). Differences were observed between former West Germany and former East Germany as well as between different qualification levels.

In a survey involving 232 company head offices, the Economic Research Institute of German Industry (IDW) found that some 70% of the firms reported a need for foreign language skills. This is especially true for larger firms, companies that have contacts abroad or companies located near the border with another EU Member State. Further differences concerning the significance of foreign languages were observed from one company division to another. Foreign language skills are especially important for divisions that foster contacts outside the firm (e.g. sales) as well as company executives (Institut der Deutschen Wirtschaft/ Erhebung, 1993). This estimated need for foreign language skills, as expressed by companies themselves, indicates that in the future the job prospects for certain employee groups could be enhanced if the applicants can demonstrate foreign language proficiency.

Current status of and new approaches to occupation-related foreign language instruction

In this situation, the teaching of general and technical foreign language skills takes on increased significance. The German Conference of Ministers of Education in the Länder Governments commissioned a survey on the current status of foreign language instruction at vocational schools in the Federal Republic of Germany. Only 3.6% of students at vocational schools, it was found, are receiving foreign language instruction, and there is a high level of variance between regions and fields. Only in exceptional cases is the acquisition of language skills codified in training regulations.

The current status of occupation-related foreign language instruction differs greatly among the Member States of the European Union. Some countries have already established standardization and uniformity.

In the UK, for example, national standards for foreign language skills are laid out by the Languages Lead Body. Five levels of language proficiency are defined. They extend from "everyday language abilities" to the ability to deal with complex information and to understand technical jargon. A work unit, established at NCVQ or SCOTVEC, is responsible for each of these levels.

In France, it will in future be possible to obtain a diploma for occupation-related foreign language proficiency. This diploma is currently being tested for English and for French as a foreign language.

In European programmes and projects for vocational training, significant emphasis is placed on occupation-related foreign language instruction. Especially important in this regard is the EU-LINGUA Programme: Action IV supports youth vocational training exchange schemes with a view to promoting foreign language learning; Action I promotes instruction within continuing training programmes running parallel to one's job and in industry in general; and Action III, facilitated by the cooperative efforts of linguists and experts in occupational practice, focuses on the elaboration of occupation-related teaching and learning materials.

The goal of the LINGUA Project LangCred is the participation of all EU Member States in an information system for certifying occupation-related foreign language skills.

In the PETRA Programme, instruction in occupation-related language skills plays a major role in the joint development of training units. The development of modules in two or more languages is important for the implementation of transnational training units. Occupation-related language instruction is required to be not limited to technical terminology, but to also take into account the social and cultural functions of a language.

A similar approach to language teaching is being pursued in the EUROQUALIFICATION Project, in which vocational training institutes from ten Member States are cooperating with each another. Instruction in general and occupation-related foreign language skills forms part of all of the 42 training units. For each individual occupation profile, studies are being carried out in order to establish parameters for technical language instruction as based on the perceived need for specialized language communication skills.

The instruction of foreign language skills is an integral component of all projects in the Community Initiatives of the European Social Fund that make provision for transnational exchanges.

The following problem clusters and questions were considered in the discussion:

- What is the perceived need for foreign language skills in individual workforce groups? It is a reasonable assumption that there can be a great deal of variance depending on the occupation, branch, form of company organization, the transnational business relations of a company, or its location (border areas).
- Which institutions should be entrusted with responsibility for foreign language teaching in initial and continuing vocational training? Should and can comparable standards be achieved at the national and EU levels? In Germany, propo-

sals range from occupation-related foreign language programmes for all vocational trainees (Association of Business School Instructors, 1989) to offering foreign languages as options within a range of priority subjects (Kuratorium der Deutschen Wirtschaft, 1992). In its recommendation on foreign language instruction in vocational training the Board of BIBB allocated this task principally to vocational schools (HA des BiBB, 1994). However, the recommendation also noted the importance of foreign language learning in continuing training.

- Which methods and organizational forms of occupation-related language training have proved their worth? Teaching methods developed in the Members States and in EU programmes vary. They range from traditional foreign language instruction to integrated technical and language learning. A further question to be discussed is to what degree foreign language training should take place abroad.

Presentations

Dr Jan van Weeren (CITO), Arnhem

LangCred: Description of the Project

Foreign language learning, especially that element thereof which is useful in working life, is becoming increasingly important in the context of

- the anticipated higher occupational mobility in the European Union;
- the inflow of persons from countries outside the Union;
- the increase in the number of companies involved in transnational activities.

Within the European Union, education and training remain the responsibility of the Member States. Where employment is transnational, therefore, additional measures are needed to ensure that not only vocational qualifications but also language qualifications are both understood and accepted by all concerned. A mobile worker must be able to furnish proof of his competence in a form from which a potential employer can understand what that worker is qualified to do; and vice versa an employer must be able to advertise for specific skills in a terminology which will be understood at supra-regional level.

It is estimated that Europe has some 250 certificates covering virtually all the EU official languages. They relate not only to the general language required for normal day-to-day communication but also to specific usages, in particular commerce, industry and catering.

Such certificates are issued by recognized institutions operating at national or international level. Usually a student can register to take the examination without having to take any specific language course.

The LangCred project (LangCred stands for language credits and credibility) was developed on the basis of Action III of the foreign language learning promotion programme LINGUA. It aims to improve the transparency and comparability of language certificates. All Member States of the EU are cooperating in the project through vocational training institutions, teacher training institutions or government agencies.

LangCred has defined five standard levels for language competence which can be briefly described as follows:

1. "Survival level": a person can "survive" or cope linguistically in ordinary social and occupational situations.
2. "Cooperation level": a person can handle more complex communication situations, though only with help from colleagues.
3. "Self-reliance level": a person masters the language sufficiently well to work abroad in his/her occupation without needing assistance for communicating.
4. "Interaction level": a person has the linguistic ability required for negotiating at work and coping with unexpected situations.
5. "Integration level": a person is still recognizable as a non-national but has virtually the same ability and means of self-expression as a native speaker.

In many cases these five levels can be seen to correspond with the five levels of vocational training defined by CEDEFOP, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. In others this is clearly not the case: for example a member of a sales team with contacts abroad might be classified at CEDEFOP level II from the qualifications viewpoint but would need to understand and communicate orally and in writing at language competence level 3 or even 4.

LangCred has so far undertaken to identify and classify general and occupation-specific language certificates at levels 1, 2 and 3. Over 130 qualifications have been described and classified as belonging to one of these three levels. Data on the qualifications and the corresponding examinations are stored in a database

which is available on disc. The database also contains data on the teaching and learning media used for developing the (occupation-specific) language competence. This part has some 1,200 entries.

As a result of the LangCred project, a basic understanding has been created about the competence level reached by the holder of any European certificate, irrespective of the language learnt and the certification body which awarded the qualification – whether it was a German chamber of commerce and industry, the International Chamber of Commerce in Paris or Pitmans Examinations Institute.

Further expansion of the LangCred system might in future lead to a situation in which job advertisements simply call for a knowledge of French at LangCred level 3, for example. Proof of such competence could then be submitted in the form of the Certificat Élémentaire de Français Pratique issued by the Alliance Française, the certificate issued by the ICC, or the Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française, Premier Degré, issued by the French Ministry of Education.

A working group of the National Foreign Language Instruction Plan in the Netherlands has urged all private language schools to gear their courses to the five LangCred levels so that clarity can at last prevail with regard to competence standards.

Not all the classifications under the LangCred system are definitive. Some are still provisional pending the outcome of a further study which will not only verify and fine-tune the classifications but also investigate the extent to which certification bodies meet a number of generally recognized quality criteria, e.g. full description of the examination goals, confidentiality, training for examiners, etc. A certification body which meets certain minimum requirements might then be authorized to use the LangCred symbol as an international quality mark in its prospectuses and advertisements and on its certificates.

Dorothea Weidinger (State Institute), Munich

Foreign Language Instruction at Vocational Schools – Possibilities and Problems of Two Pilot Projects and the Integration of PETRA II in These Projects

The first pilot project for teaching foreign languages at vocational schools, which was run between 1990 and 1993 at 27 vocational schools in Bavaria, aimed first and foremost to explore how foreign languages could be taught in different organizational contexts. The languages covered were English, French, Spanish and Italian, though English accounted for over 90 % of the instruction.

The foreign language instruction was offered on both a block basis and a day basis and was available either as an optional subject or as a compulsory subject on the basis of additional school-time conceded by the employers concerned (10 additional schooldays per year). Depending on the course concerned, the instruction amounted to between 38 and 76 hours per year. The class composition was usually identical with that for the occupation-specific instruction.

The instruction was generally provided by vocational teachers whose second qualification was in a foreign language; this was predominantly the case in the most popular subjects: business studies and administration. In addition, special arrangements were made so that the project could source foreign language teachers from academic secondary and intermediate secondary schools on a part-time basis. In a few cases recourse was also had to state-certified interpreters and translators.

The pilot project first analysed the need for foreign language skills in the various occupations and occupational fields and then developed corresponding curricula geared to each of these occupations. Teaching media were screened and tested and various forms of instruction tried out, in particular project work and intensive learning.

Comparisons of attainment levels in foreign language learning based on the annual progress ratings of the vocational schools soon showed considerably deficits among students with the lower secondary certificate in English. The classes were therefore streamed by ability and this became a requirement for compulsory language subjects. As a flanking measure, self-managed learning materials were

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screened and tested mainly for use by students with the lower secondary certificate.

An important task in this connection involved the development, testing and optimization of language modules. The modules were developed in cooperation with partners in London and La Felguera (Spain) within the framework of the PETRA II programme (project D 54). They offer German as a second language for students of commerce (beginners and improvers), commercial English and commercial Spanish. They proved to be a good means of providing occupation-related foreign language instruction on a modular basis. They also gave the students the opportunity of meeting the foreign language communication needs at a (commercial) workplace.

The continuing training measures covered by the pilot project involved the introduction of such language modules into vocational school instruction, CALL (computer-aided language learning), team teaching, self-managed learning to compensate for personal language deficits, concepts for project work and intensive teaching, and basic methodologies for differentiating instruction. In addition, a continuing training project for teaching personnel was launched at the In-Service Training Academy in Dillingen whereby vocational teachers with a good knowledge of English are prepared for taking the teacher's examination for teaching English in two-year courses involving 12 weeks of course attendance plus distance study for the remaining time.

The outcome of the pilot project resulted in English being introduced as a compulsory subject for various commercial and industrial courses in Bavaria and established that English is to be included in the curriculum whenever a vocational course (at least in the commercial field) is updated. The results of the needs analysis in the industrial sector were less clear. English was found to be only desirable in the electrical and electronic engineering field and no foreign language needs could be detected in the metalworking field.

The pilot project is being continued from 1994 to 1997 under the title "compulsory foreign language instruction at vocational schools". One of the aims now is to evaluate the possibilities of and limits to teaching foreign languages at vocational schools under present circumstances and conditions. A test has therefore been developed for four abilities which is to be sat by over 5,000 incoming students. The students have been selected on a representative basis with regard to their educational background and vocational aspirations. The results of this test will perhaps provide information on the attainment levels reached in the four abil-

ities tested by incoming students from different educational backgrounds. This information would help vocational schools gear the content of their instruction and the methodologies used to their own particular student clientele. Such fine-tuning is particularly important because foreign language needs differ considerably from one occupation to another, especially with regard to the individual skills to be developed and the nature of the documents to be handled in later life. This calls for differentiated curricula, methodologies and teaching materials.

On leaving vocational school, the students will take a leaving test which should provide information on what has been achieved during the two or three years of language instruction (individual skills and occupation-related language competence). One result might be that students who undergo foreign language instruction are less likely to forget what they had previously learned than students in the control group who did not have the instruction (and who are also to be tested on entry and on leaving). Such results could be helpful in developing, with empirical back-up, strong arguments concerning the design of foreign language instruction for vocational courses. A flanking measure in this second part of the pilot project is again the testing and evaluation of teaching materials which are to optimize those developed within the framework of the PETRA programme.

In more general terms it is hoped that this second part of the pilot project will do more than provide evidence of the effectiveness of foreign language instruction at vocational school. The aim is also to obtain practical answers to the question of defining optimal teaching materials for such instruction.

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Panel Discussion

Foreign Languages at Work: How to Teach Them and to Whom?

Panelists

Dietrich Elchlepp (Federal Ministry of Education and Science), Bonn; Werner Hüster (Senat Department of Education and Science), Bremen; Dieter Klause (German Association of Commerce and Industry DIHT), Bonn; Ton Koenen (CITO), Arnhem, Netherlands; Veronika Pahl (German Employees Union DAG), Hamburg; Dr Jan van Weeren (CITO), Arnhem, Netherlands; Dorothea Weidinger (State Institute), Munich

Moderator

Professor Dr Albert Raasch (University of Saarland), Saarbrücken

Rapporteurs

Dr Ernst Ross, Dr Jens U. Schmidt (BIBB), Berlin

At the beginning of the discussion a consensus was established to the effect that learning a foreign language today has to signify more than mastering the grammar and vocabulary. Contemporary efforts to develop new, language-related learning concepts and the associated didactic theories focus on international contacts in commerce, at work, and also between people and therefore call for an understanding of the mentalities, value systems, stereotypes and the culture of a foreign country – the basics which one must know about others.

Learning a foreign language for occupational purposes therefore not only signifies mastering the technical terminology but also has much to do with interpersonal and intercultural communication. Above and beyond facilitating cross-border understanding, learning a foreign language also entails appreciation of the European dimension. It entails mind-shifts towards more togetherness and cooperation, mutual acceptance and also acceptance of foreign communities in one's own country.

Four questions were discussed:

- Should foreign language teaching in the vocational sector be an independent field of learning or an extension of the corresponding teaching in the general education sector?

- Should occupation-related foreign language skills be taught for all occupations or only for those occupations where foreign language skills are essential?
- Does occupation-related foreign language teaching require its own didactics?
- What is the impact of European integration on the learning of foreign languages?

Foreign language teaching in the vocational sector: an independent field?

The discussion here asked not only whether occupation-related foreign language teaching is or should be an independent field but also what must be done to make it an independent field and what has already been done in this respect in companies and schools in the EU Member States. It was also asked whether foreign language audits, need analyses and similar investigations are a means of establishing occupation-related foreign language teaching as an independent field.

The panelists could not fully agree on whether occupation-related foreign language teaching should be an independent field. It was conceded that lack of language skills is an obstacle to business cooperation, even in border regions, but it was also pointed out that this problem could only be solved if foreign language teaching in the vocational sector is regarded not as an independent field but as part of a more general foreign language instruction policy. Regarding the particularities of occupation-related language teaching, it was admitted that such exist but argued that they only emerge once a general framework of communication skills and competence has been established.

Other discussants stressed the distinct role of occupation-related foreign language teaching. They pointed out that those involved in vocational training (employers, trade unions, government agencies) must clarify their position, i.e. confirm their frequently expressed need for the corresponding skills. Audits and needs analyses, it was claimed, are frequently called for but ultimately in order to distract attention from a very real question: who is to provide the resources, the time and money required for the additional teaching of foreign languages?

It was also pointed out that the need for occupation-related foreign language learning has now been clarified by a large number of analyses. Further needs analyses might be helpful but would not signify any practical progress. The decisive question is rather: how is the articulated need actually met in practice?

The discussion subsequently explored the difference between foreign language learning in the general education sector and occupation-related foreign language learning in the vocational and continuing training sectors. A basic general knowledge of a language is the basis for more advanced, specialized, occupation-related language learning. A basic language awareness should therefore be developed in general education but also through initial vocational training. Further specialization could then be tackled at continuing training level. The basic, general foreign language teaching and development of language awareness should take place at state-funded schools and other educational institutions. The specialization to meet specific occupational and corporate needs should be financed by companies.

Foreign language instruction for all occupations or only those where it is essential?

It was urged that before a discussion is triggered off on foreign language learning in the vocational sector there is a need to stabilize and broaden the opportunities of learning foreign languages in the general education sector under the motto "foreign language instruction for everyone". Only when this goal has been reached could efforts be made to develop special occupation-related language skills among all young people in initial vocational training.

The employers supported the call for "foreign language skills for all" only insofar as it concerns general education. They took the view that foreign languages should be taught in the vocational sector only in connection with occupations where such skills are an indispensable part of working life. This view was challenged with the argument that "an indispensable part of working life" is not the salient point. The most important reason and motive for learning foreign languages, in the vocational sector and elsewhere, is the process of European integration, a process which is taking place not only at the business level but also at the cultural and interpersonal levels. This would justify the call for "occupation-related foreign language instruction for all".

Does occupation-related foreign language instruction need its own didactics?

Methodological and didactic particularities in occupation-related foreign language instruction have to do with its being geared to occupational requirements. This relativizes the importance of grammatical accuracy, allows for greater error margins and gives priority to communication skills.

Importance was attached to exchange schemes, and the strong interest they attract was pointed out. Such schemes represent a first step in establishing an anchor for foreign language learning in the vocational sector and a didactically sound way of learning a foreign language.

Reference was also made to other methods of learning foreign languages, for example the tandem method, the use of foreign-language media developed abroad for use with students and trainees in that country but which are also highly suitable for use as authentic material in other countries.

A distinct didactic approach for occupation-related language learning would have to be developed on the basis of transnational cooperation. Exchange schemes should be more numerous and become an integral part of initial vocational training. Furthermore, the training provision for teachers of foreign languages should be more closely geared to the vocational sector and exchange schemes for teachers of vocational subjects promoted. It would be perfectly conceivable, for example, that a French teacher of motor vehicle technology give instruction in this subject in French at a vocational school in Germany.

Regarding the didactics issue it was also pointed out that occupation-related language learning should be one element in a lifelong learning process in which skills and competences are continually built up. In Germany, a new concept for foreign language instruction is currently being developed at federal state level which is to anchor language instruction within a lifelong learning framework starting during elementary education and extending into continuing training. The time for initiation into a foreign language is to be brought forward to elementary education and the follow-up during secondary education is to lay the foundations for further independent learning for both occupational and general purposes.

The ensuing discussion examined examples from various projects and initiatives. It was stated that introducing foreign language instruction in vocational education and in-company training would be very problematic for capacity and financial reasons. To illustrate this point a report was given on a pilot project in Germany to integrate subject-specific and language teaching which had failed because of the shortage of teachers of vocational subjects who also have the necessary foreign language skills and of teachers of foreign languages who are also qualified to teach a vocational subject. Another unsolved problem discussed was whether foreign language instruction should be offered as an additional subject – which would increase the total number of hours of instruction – or whether the time devoted to other subjects should be reduced commensurately to accommo-

date such instruction. Another open question is the number of hours of instruction per week and as a whole which would be required for occupation-related foreign language learning. A further point made was the lack of funding available for foreign language teaching in general and for exchange schemes for trainees.

However, reports were also heard about some positive initiatives. One example concerned a mechanical engineering company in Germany which has funded exchange trips abroad for its trainees and found that they are very keen to participate in the scheme and to learn a foreign language. The trainees who participated in the scheme all passed the examinations for the additional qualification in "occupation-related foreign language competence" without any problems. This company is in favour of all trainees (i.e. including those training for technico-industrial occupations) undergoing foreign language instruction and of making such instruction a compulsory rather than optional part of the curriculum at vocational schools.

Reports were also heard on the differences noted between eastern and western Germany in this respect. Interest in learning foreign languages was particularly pronounced in the "new" states of the Federal Republic, i.e. eastern Germany, and the corresponding action has been taken there to arrange for the necessary courses and funding. In the western part of Germany, by contrast, the attitude tends to be that there is "no room in the curriculum, no money and no time" for foreign language teaching in the vocational sector.

What is the impact of European integration on foreign language learning?

The importance of learning foreign languages to respond to European integration has now generally been acknowledged and was in no way contested during the discussion. But little has so far been said about what Europe can do for foreign language learning. Virtually all contributors to the discussion stressed the particular importance of exchange schemes between Member States. The LINGUA programme in particular was seen to have been a success; two-week to three-week exchanges were arranged under this programme for between 28,000 and 30,000 young people. The demand, however, was double or even triple the capacity available. It is hoped that the scheme will be continued under the SOCRATES programme.

The vocational training opportunities offered by the EUROQUALIFICATIONS programme entail a stay abroad lasting between three and six weeks and vocational training in the language of the host country – an ideal mix of vocational training and language learning. This programme is undoubtedly optimal for countries where English, French, German or Spanish is spoken. The smaller Member States face problems here, however, because of the only slight interest in exchange trips to these countries and a shortage of training personnel who are qualified to give both language and vocational training.

The LangCred project presented before the panel discussion was considered to be an important initiative. Doubts were expressed, however, from the viewpoint of competition law as most of the institutions involved in the project are private-sector undertakings. The German Association of Commerce and Industry (DIHT) suggested assigning the project to the Council of Europe.

Reports were also heard on national and bilateral initiatives. The Federal Ministry of Education and Science in Germany is supporting a pilot project offering some 400 training places mainly to workers aged between 26 and 35 years. Responsibility for implementing the project has been assigned to the Carl Duisberg Society. The DIHT is examining possibilities of cooperating with other countries in organizing an exchange scheme for apprentices. The London Chamber of Commerce operates a very flexible exchange scheme, though funding remains a particular problem. A still unresolved problem is the lack of exchange opportunities in the adult education sector.

There was general agreement that the existing programmes are important and useful and that they should be further expanded. The problems – mainly capacities, funding, closer integration in national vocational training systems, and reaching the right target groups – were seen to be solvable but would require continued unrelenting effort.

Workshop B 2

Occupational Skills for Europe-Wide Competence

Introduction Paper

Brigitte Wolf (BIBB), Berlin

The main idea behind LEONARDO, the EU Commission's draft action programme, is to strengthen the European dimension in vocational training. The primary underlying concern has to do with Europe's competitiveness vis-à-vis other countries and regions and the need to bring about economic alignment among the Member States (see also the Commission Memorandum on Community Vocational Training Policy for the 1990s, dated 12.12.91). However, the Commission's statements do not provide a concrete definition of the European dimension of vocational training, for example by outlining Europe-related qualifications.

On the other hand, various developments are contributing to a certain "Europeanization" of qualifications.

- Seizing the opportunities opened up by free movement within the Single Market, companies are increasingly expanding their business relations in other Member States. This entails a growing need for Europe-related qualifications, which for the most part have up until now been a component of vocational training.
- European worker mobility will tend to increase in the future; however, no large-scale labour migrations are to be expected. Mobility between countries belonging to the European Union will rise primarily among executives working for larger firms, specialists and people living near the border of another EU Member State.
- EU Council Directives regarding certain economic sectors or areas, for example transnational environmental protection, the food and semi-luxury food industries, international transport or ISO 9000 ff for quality guarantee systems, all

require expanded area-specific training efforts directed towards identical objectives throughout Europe.

Occupation-specific Euro-qualifications for different occupational fields and individual occupations have so far only been drawn up in isolated cases. There are a number of reasons for this:

- The employment system's needs with regard to occupational qualifications change rapidly. As a general rule, the closer a skill is linked to a limited field of activity, the more rapidly it must adapt to changing conditions. This is especially true in areas undergoing a process of industrial transformation.
- Discrepancies in occupational definitions as well as diverging production conditions and concepts in the Member States lead to dissimilar skill groupings in the various fields of activity.
- Because of differences in the Member States' educational systems, uniform vocational training measures can be applied throughout Europe only to a limited degree.

In order to foster convergence in European vocational training, so-called Euro-modules are being jointly developed in various areas by training organizations and institutions from a number of Member States within the framework of European Union programmes. In this way, specific training units are to be uniformly structured in cooperation with other countries throughout Europe. The objective is not to standardize entire vocational training courses, but rather to integrate individual training units developed at the European level into existing national initial and continuing training measures. However, these Euro-modules can become the point of departure for creating occupational profiles that would be similar across Europe, subject of course to possible limits originating from different institutional parameters and organizational structures as well as different legal and administrative systems in the individual Member States. This could be an appropriate vehicle for promoting the coherence and transferability of vocational qualifications in the EU.

Along these lines, transnational modules for certain occupational areas and instructor training are being developed in the PETRA action programme. Initial assessments on the joint elaboration and application of these modules in the individual Member States are now available.

- European modules cannot be developed independently of the respective national context.
- European modules cannot be simply transposed; they must be transformed.
- European modules should always contain a transnational element.
- Because of legal differences regarding education and vocational training in the various Member States, the development of European modules should not be accompanied by concurrent efforts to secure formal legal recognition of those models on a reciprocal or European level.

Current information indicates that the development of individual training components as part of occupation-specific Euro-qualifications is increasingly also taking place within the framework of in-company initial and continuing vocational training. This applies especially to large companies. Europe-related skill needs are covered first of all by training existing staff. Participation in a programme of practical training abroad or an unpaid traineeship in another Member State plays an important role in providing the skills in question. However, the opportunity to acquire occupationally relevant, Europe-related qualifications in companies is usually open only to a very limited group of people, generally speaking executives or specialists who are being prepared for work abroad.

Questions for discussion

- In which areas/occupational fields are Euro-qualifications required?
- Beyond the instruction of foreign languages and intercultural skills, which occupation-specific, Europe-related requirements need to be met?
- Should Euro-qualifications be integrated into or added as a supplement to national training courses and, if so, in what areas/occupational fields?
- How should the acquisition of those skills be certified or documented within the framework of national education systems?
- What measures are companies, schools or other educational organizations taking in order to promote Europe-related occupation-specific competence?
- How can small and medium-size companies be supported in their efforts to cover their needs for Europe-related qualifications?

Practical Examples

Marina Schürmann (Schmolz + Bickenbach), Düsseldorf

Training Partnerships in the Steel Industry

Schmolz + Bickenbach is an important steel manufacturing and trading company which was involved in the PETRA programme from 1991 to 1994. The aims of the project run under the auspices of the programme were:

- to exchange trainees with European partner companies,
- to provide training for young people from the participating companies in jointly devised training modules,
- to expand transnational contacts,
- to acquaint the trainees with the language and customs of the host country.

The English partner in the project was Ues Steels Stockbridge, a steel producer in central England. The Spanish partner was Altos Hornos De Bergara S.A., likewise a steel manufacturing company.

German trainees were trained in the two partner companies and trainees from the English company went to Germany for training. Trainees received from four to six weeks training in the commercial sector, mainly in the purchasing, sales and accounts departments.

All the trainees undertook their external training courses with enthusiasm and commitment, showing a high level of motivation and willingness to work hard. Their stay abroad gave them the opportunity to gain new professional and personal experience and to establish many new private contacts and friendships.

The project formally ended this year with the expiry of the PETRA programme's involvement. Because of their positive experiences with the project, however, the companies have decided to stay in contact with each other and to continue to exchange trainees in the coming years.

Initially it was not easy for the companies to find suitable partners for these exchanges because of the competitive situation. Once the partners had been found, however, the cooperation ran very satisfactorily. In the beginning the English partner had difficulties in finding trainees who were prepared to go to Germany for an extended period and to learn the language in order to do so. No young people were sent from Spain to Germany, presumably because of the

absence of initial in-company vocational training in Spain. All the German trainees wanted to go abroad, but only small groups could be sent at any one time.

A total of four modules were developed for the project. These modules are suitable for use by companies in other branches of industry and in other countries since the commercial activities involved remain basically the same.

The Chamber of Industry and Commerce to which the German company is attached has made the training units completed abroad a formal part of the training contract and issued a supplementary certificate for them.

Johannes van de Vosse (Stichting Leerlingsstelsel Wegvervoer), Alphen aan de Rijn, Netherlands

Experiences with the PETRAnsport Network

In the Netherlands training in road transport began in 1969. In recent years links have been established with partner organizations throughout Europe, and there are now 14 partners in 10 European countries. Cooperation in vocational training concentrates on the subjects of the transport of dangerous goods and logistics.

For many years the European Regulation on the Transport of Dangerous Goods has been applied very differently by the various Member States. In order to achieve greater harmonization in terms of vocational training practice, it was decided that greater cooperation was needed; partnerships were thus established under the auspices of the PETRA programme.

The result of the cooperation was to demonstrate that training continues to vary greatly between the Member States. A person wishing to become a road haulier in Germany or the Netherlands must undergo a requisite period of one to two years training, compared with a period of one week in the United Kingdom. Dutch HGV drivers were sent to England for four weeks on an exchange, returning with an NVQ certificate as motor vehicle mechanic. The Dutch apprentices complained to the shop steward in the English company about the nature of the work they were required to perform which was not in line with training requirements. This example shows that very different training cultures and training standards pertain

in the different countries. In all our euphoria about Europe, it is important that we are aware of this fact and guard against a downward levelling of standards, even if they are thought to be too demanding.

The modules, courses and materials used in the projects were designed to give clear answers with regard to actual requirements in industry. Those involved felt that the development of vocational training requirements entailed more than sitting round a table in isolation from real life. Since, moreover, the market changes very rapidly, it was considered important to design the European programmes in a way which would allow for flexibility and rapid response. The PETRA programme provided this flexibility; it is to be hoped that the LEONARDO programme will do the same.

Ferdinand Fuchs (Cologne Chamber of Crafts)

A German-Irish Joint Training Project

The Cologne Chamber of Crafts has been working in collaboration with the Irish training and employment agency FAS since 1989, running a trainee exchange scheme under the auspices of the PETRA programme. It was decided at an early stage that to get the best out of their exchanges, the young people should undergo several weeks of preparation to familiarize them with the language and culture of the country. Since that time many exchanges have been carried out. During their stay in Germany all the young people have been exposed to new working practices and techniques, have had their linguistic and cultural horizons broadened and have established friendships with their partners.

The German firms, most of them craft businesses with an average workforce of eight, would have preferred to take the young people for longer in order to be able to teach them more skills and incorporate them into their company training schedule. However, lack of knowledge of the language on the part of the trainees made this unfeasible. The firms were also quite prepared to pay the trainees an appropriate training allowance, but this was not sufficient to cover the costs of accommodation, the support programme and travel costs.

The first two years of the project were given over to exchange schemes, each involving approximately 30 young people from Germany, Ireland and Belgium at any one time. Alongside the Irish partner, the Eupen Institute for the permanent continuing education and training of employees from small and medium-size businesses also joined the PETRA network. During this time trainers from the metalworking and electrical engineering sectors travelled to the partner countries to collect information.

During the third year of the project, in addition to the ongoing exchange schemes, results from the exchanges were systematically collated and a comparison was undertaken of the skills of young people from the metalworking and electrical engineering sectors in Germany and Ireland. The two existing national training courses were compared and training modules devised, taking into account the results of the exchanges and study trips undertaken by the trainers. Skeleton curricula and timetables from both countries were compared and discrepancies sorted out, making it possible to identify the relative time in their training at which trainees in the electrical engineering and motor mechanic fields in both countries can expect to acquire a particular skill. On the basis of this work it will now be possible for future exchange programmes to specify from the outset the particular skills the young people are to be taught in the respective exchange country.

All these findings have been carefully analysed and incorporated in a new project aimed at providing young Irish people with complete training in Ireland and Germany. The first year of basic training in electrical engineering takes place in Ireland. The time frame makes it possible for the young people to prepare themselves for continuing their training in another country by learning about the language and culture of the country while at the same time completing basic technical training courses at home. The second phase of their training takes place in craft businesses in Germany.

Up to now activities within the project have centred predominantly on those directly involved in the project, and the problem of how to transfer the findings of the project to national level has yet to be resolved. This is a case where in Germany bodies such as the Board of BIBB are called upon to incorporate European material into training. Other countries seem to be more flexible in this respect and react significantly faster to changing demand, leaving Germany in danger of missing out.

For many years Cologne Chamber of Crafts has been involved in a "European Master Craftsman Certificate" pilot project which brings working people from France, the Netherlands and Ireland to Germany to sit the examination to qualify

as master craftsman. Admission to the examination is open to those holding an appropriate national vocational qualification. Examinees sit the examination in their mother tongue, a practice which is in fact in contravention of the corresponding examination regulation which specifies German as the examination language. This is just one example which proves that it is sometimes necessary to adopt unconventional ways to further the development of the European Union.

Panel Discussion

Which Skills are Needed to Complement and Broaden National Training Curricula in the Light of European Integration?

Panelists

Ferdinand Fuchs, (Cologne Chamber of Crafts), Cologne; Bodo Richard (Brandenburg Ministry of Culture), Potsdam; Marina Schürmann, (Schmolz+Bickenbach), Düsseldorf; Johannes van de Vosse (Stichting Leerlingsstelsel Wegvervoer), Alphen aan de Rijn, Netherlands; Peter Thiele (Federal Ministry of Education and Science), Bonn

Moderator

Professor David Raffe (University of Edinburgh), Scotland

Rapporteur

Dr Georg Hanf (BIBB), Berlin

The discussion concentrated on the following points:

- What do we understand by Euro-skills and in what areas do they most urgently need to be developed?
- What is the situation with regard to the recognition of "Euro-qualifications" as part of regular training?
- What are the prospects for further European cooperation; is there a need for directives or regulations to create a Europe-wide skill area?

In the discussion the terms "Euro-qualifications" and "Euro-skills" were used synonymously.

What do we understand by Euro-skills and in what areas do they most urgently need to be developed?

Euro-skills were defined differently by those taking part in the discussion, and the emphasis in terms of priorities was also different. There was universal agreement, however, on the need for such skills.

It was agreed that in the first instance Euro-skills related to language skills and an understanding of the various European business cultures. In the commercial sector this covers knowledge of European law, particularly commercial and contract law, skills in negotiating and written communication, and specialist technical knowledge. It was considered that these were skills that would in future be needed by middle and lower-level employees as well as those holding management positions.

In terms of Euro-qualifications it was thought to be more important to stress the acquisition of the right attitudes than specialist skills and abilities. Understood in these terms, it was considered unnecessary to create a network of rules and regulations, since qualifications of this nature involved the entire training process and their scope tended to be unlimited. There was agreement that it was more appropriate to incorporate subject matter such as transnational trade, legal systems in other countries, job-related language, etc. in the regular in-company and/or school training process rather than making it an additional qualification. It was suggested that intercultural studies of a broad nature not related to any particular technical area should be offered as an option in vocational schools.

It was stressed that intercultural studies was not a matter for vocational training alone. Attempts should be made to develop the subject "from below", i.e. starting in the general education system, preferably employing foreign teaching staff for the purpose. Up to now it was pointed out that "foreigners" have had virtually no access to teaching positions in the various countries, and it was now thought to be time to replace the territorial principle which still holds sway with a European principle. It was agreed that the matter of intercultural education needed to be addressed seriously in all countries.

A point reiterated by the Irish PETRA coordinator was that in the first instance, specialized Euro-skills as a condition for access to the European labour market needed to be taught "at home". While the explicit goal of some of the PETRA projects in Ireland was to develop and promote Euro-qualifications in conjunction with European partners, she stressed that the main concern of the majority of the projects was to use the instrument of transnational cooperation to raise national stan-

dards of qualification to European levels in order to enable trainees to achieve professional mobility. The emphasis was on adding a European dimension to the training in question.

There was agreement that certain sectors, e.g. the transport sector, were by their nature "European", since they had a transnational slant. The Dutch spokesman pointed out that businesses obviously had to know what was expected in other countries in this sector in terms of services, transportation and storage in order to be able to adjust their training accordingly; he did not, however, consider that this necessitated a formalized system of Euro-qualifications.

A representative from the German Zentralstelle für Arbeitsvermittlung (ZAV), a placement agency, gave various examples of special skills which a young person could most usefully acquire by working in another country. He cited German roofing trainees, for instance, learning to thatch roofs in Denmark, florists working in the Canary Islands, and employees in the tourism industry working in Italy to gain professional experience. He reported that the ZAV offered secretaries with foreign language skills from other countries the opportunity to gain experience in a German administration.

To summarize, the following spectrum of specialist Euro-skills was identified:

1. Europe begins at home: Technical training in each Member State must be geared to enable every individual to reach a sufficiently high standard to be able to compete in the European jobs market. This includes the acquisition of job-related foreign language skills.

2. Sections of training which are part of the training curriculum will be relocated abroad (example: wholesale and foreign trade). Knowledge and skills acquired while abroad will constitute part of regular German vocational training and at the same time represent a specialist Euro-skill since they are imparted abroad through the medium of the foreign language.

3. In various sectors there is a transnational element which is regulated by European directives (example: Regulation on the transport of dangerous goods). Building on this basis, standard training modules will be developed to implement these directives, ensuring the same level of competence throughout Europe.

4. National training systems will be harmonized with each other on a complementary basis so that they can be linked in with each other. Skills acquired in a particular country will become Euro-skills by virtue of the fact that their standards will be raised to a level where they can interface as widely as possible with other systems and can count towards the overall training in another country (example: German Chamber of Crafts and FAS/Ireland).

What is the situation with regard to the recognition of "Euro-qualifications" as part of regular training?

The extent to which training units completed abroad can be integrated into regular training depends on the mutual recognition of Euro-modules. There are major differences here between the Member States. At one end of the scale there is Germany with its tightly regulated, closed training system and at the other end there is Scotland with its flexible, fully modular system which is better able to incorporate Euro-modules. There was a controversial discussion on the recognition of training units completed abroad although there was general agreement that this was the best way to acquire Euro-qualifications.

Various examples were cited of how the problem of recognizing training units completed abroad was currently handled in various sectors and countries.

In the Dutch-German border area, there are already schemes involving dual-language teaching which lead to examinations in both countries, thereby guaranteeing that the training is fully recognized in both countries.

In Denmark a law has been in force since 1992 which allows sections of training to be completed in other countries. In the absence of sufficient traineeships in Denmark, the law was created to take advantage of the surplus of traineeships in various sectors and regions in Germany. Foreign training venues are first vetted by a committee composed of representatives of the Danish social partners to ensure their suitability. At the present time between 500 and 700 Danish trainees are receiving training abroad.

In the hotel and catering trade it has been common practice for a long time to send trainees abroad. German trainees complete parts of their training in France or Great Britain without any extension of the overall length of their training. Although this transnational sandwich model is approved by the relevant German ministry, this does not mean the schemes have formal recognition.

In its above-mentioned review of German and Irish training curricula, Cologne Chamber of Crafts identified large areas of similarity in various sectors. Consequently it was agreed that these identical sections of training would, when completed abroad, count towards the training in the trainee's home country without any extension to the overall training period. In this respect both Cologne Chamber of Crafts and its counterpart in Lower Franconia have taken a lead.

For the German Ministry of Education and Science it was reported that the question of recognition remains spurious although it has provoked and continues to provoke so much political controversy. In the final analysis it was pointed out that it was the individual employer who decided whether or not to employ an applicant on the basis of his or her particular skills, regardless of national and/or European directives. For this decision the "portfolio", which provides detailed information on the educational, training and professional biography of the employee, was suggested as a useful basis and an alternative to the comparability procedure. It was reported that the Federal Republic of Germany had submitted a practical proposal for standardizing the certificates issued in recognition of training abroad. According to the proposal, certificates would contain a description of the content of the training and an assessment of performance using the terminology appropriate to vocational documents (the "portfolio") and would be formulated in the languages of both the seconding and the host country. It was also emphasized on behalf of the Federal Ministry that there was a definite willingness to open up the German vocational training system and allow sections of training completed in other countries to count towards training at home. It was stressed, however, that this was to be understood as a voluntary action and not as the result of a directive from above. The quality of training received abroad needs to be monitored, and models still have to be devised in this respect.

What are the prospects for further European cooperation; is there a need for directives or regulations to create a Europe-wide skill area?

In terms of EU programmes it was thought desirable to have as few central regulations as possible. Industry representatives, for example, stressed the need to retain the relatively large degree of freedom of action and responsibility which pertained in the PETRA programme. The German Central Placement Agency (Zentralstelle für Arbeitsvermittlung - ZAV) agreed that it was not essential to lay down the content of training abroad, since this was better left to the individual companies.

Professor David Raffe
University of Edinburgh, Scotland

It was felt that the training and employment systems were too diverse to make it possible to devise regulations to accommodate them all.

A representative of the German Trades Union Confederation, on the other hand, took the view that a few directives and/or recommendations from the European Union are indeed needed in order to create a social Europe and a Europe-wide vocational training structure and to ensure that freedom of movement did not operate to the detriment of employees.

The German side called for changes to national regulations. There were complaints that the Employment Promotion Act (AFG Article 34, Para 1) made no provision for funding training abroad. In the Franco-German border area, funding was even refused for young people from Kehl to receive parts of their training two kilometres away in Strasbourg. It was felt that something urgently needed to be done in this respect. A representative of the German federal states called for a change to the Vocational Training Act (BBiG) to allow European training modules to be incorporated into training without prejudice to the young people concerned.

In overall terms it was stressed that a dynamic internal market required flexible programme structures and rapid adaptation of legal provisions. At the same time there was a need for appraisal and evaluation procedures to be built into the LEONARDO programme in order to guarantee quality standards in European cooperation.

Workshop B 3

Provision for Latecomers in the Training System: Recognition of Young Workers' Work Experience and Previous Learning Record

Introduction Paper

Brigitte Wolf (BIBB), Berlin

At present, the rate of unemployment within the European Union is 10.9 % (May 1994 data). Of special concern from the perspective of economic and social policy is the high level of unemployment among youngsters and young adults under the age of 25. The average EU rate of unemployment for this group is currently at 20.3 %, ranging from 38 % in Spain to 7.2 % in Luxembourg. All studies point to the fact that young workers without basic vocational qualifications are threatened most and hit hardest by unemployment: in the EU, they are on average four times more likely to become unemployed than are young adults with better qualifications. The new increase in unemployment since 1990 has struck members of this group with particular severity; furthermore, they scarcely benefited at all from the economic upturn and increase of employment in the second half of the 1980s.

Despite the clear commitment exhibited by the Member States and the EU, the number of poorly prepared youngsters entering the working world has not dropped significantly in recent years. If the gap between the need for well-trained specialists and rising basic-level unemployment is to be narrowed, it is necessary to offer these young people access to vocational training and to develop and promote market-relevant forms of recognition for their work experience and previous learning record.

The individual Member States have opted to stress different main points in their efforts to foster training for young workers who are latecomers on the training market:

Modularization of training courses

By means of the modularization of training courses, a number of Member States are attempting to organize their training systems so as to correspond more appropriately to youngsters' individual backgrounds and experience levels. Denmark has introduced modularization especially in courses for unskilled and semi-skilled workers. The modularization of vocational training courses is developed furthest of all in the United Kingdom and Ireland. This approach has been successful in helping young people who have no vocational training certificates to obtain recognized occupational skills. In some Member States, for example Germany, possibilities to modularize initial vocational training are limited due to established system characteristics as well as regulatory and vocational training policy concepts. In such cases, modules are used as an instrument for the didactic structuring of comprehensive vocational training courses, but never lead to recognized certificates in and of themselves.

Linking gainful employment and subsequent training

Linking gainful employment and training is an important element in Germany's approach to enabling young workers to catch up on training. Initial insights gleaned from training measures run parallel to employment have been incorporated into an action concept for the vocational training of young people who have not completed any vocational training programmes. This concept makes provision for model experiments in which tests are run for curricula and organizational forms that facilitate the establishment of a link between gainful employment and training and take into account participants' past work experience by means of individualized training plans.

Recognition of work experience and previous learning record

In France, young people who have left the educational system without receiving any kind of certification are given the possibility to gain recognition of the skills and knowledge they have acquired. (The so-called "crédit formation individualisé" was introduced in 1989) The assessment and recognition of previously acquired vocational abilities and knowledge for young people without certificates is a matter of considerable importance in the Netherlands as well. The system developed

in the Netherlands also aims to make it easier for employers to ascertain the value of the various diplomas issued by private and public training organizations.

Drawing on reports in which a number of Member States relate their experiences, the discussion is to revolve around the following problem clusters and questions:

- What kind of dimensions has the problem of a lack of training certificates taken on in the Member States?
- Which groups of young workers are hit hardest by that problem?
- Why are these groups slipping through the respective vocational training systems?
- Is there a correlation between the "unskilled rate" and the type of vocational training system (i.e. full-time school education versus alternating vocational training)?
- To what extent are the imperatives of subsequent training derived from changing structures/demands of the economic and employment system? Do companies formulate corresponding requirements?
- How closely linked is subsequent training to the workplace/operational process? Do school-based teaching forms predominate? What is the relative importance of the "place of work" for the subsequent training of people who are more or less not used to learning?
- Are young workers' past work experience and previous qualifications taken into account on an individual basis and do those factors serve as a foundation for subsequent training?
- What qualification level does subsequent training aim to attain? Are certificates with supra-regional applicability issued? Are certain training modules considered to be of overriding importance? What about testing and certification procedures?
- For young people without any vocational training certification, to what extent are training measures being developed with a relative value lying below or peripheral to regular vocational training certificates? What testing and certification procedures are applied with regard to the recognition of previous work experience and past learning record? What other procedures are conceivable?
- To what degree could subsequent training schemes that are successful at the national level and the insights gained from such experience be applied in other Member States?

Presentations

Annie Bouder (CEREQ), Marseille

In France there are a number of ways open to young, poorly qualified adults to catch up on an initial vocational training qualification. These are legally regulated and securely funded training schemes and provisions leading to a recognized vocational qualification. I would like to concentrate on three particular aspects: firstly the legal provisions, secondly the various ways for young people to catch up on a vocational qualification, and thirdly the question of certification.

The schemes are governed by two types of legal provision: *statutory regulations and regulations under the terms of collective bargaining law*; one set of regulations governs measures for young people provided under the terms of employment market policy and the other set are regulations for continuing vocational training and education which require companies to contribute a fixed percentage of their payroll to continuing training measures.

These regulations are reflected in the organization of the schemes. Possibilities exist for young unskilled people to obtain qualifications via continuing training measures, schemes run under employment market policy and via the recognition of acquired occupation knowledge and skills.

Employees have several possibilities *within continuing vocational training provision*. All employees, for instance, are entitled to individual training leave – depending on their length of service – and also to leave for the purposes of preparing a resumé of their theoretical and practical skills and abilities. In addition, companies can draw up a continuing education curriculum either on their own initiative or after agreement between the collective bargaining partners.

Measures within employment market policy to promote the integration of young people into working life culminate in the awarding of a recognized vocational qualification. The target group are predominantly 16 to 25 year-olds. The individual schemes are tailored to the educational background and particular problems of the target group.

- The "*contrat d'apprentissage*" is designed for young adults who have not completed any formal training or who cannot make use of their training on the employment market; it aims to provide the participants with a recognized vocational qualification. In France there are five levels of vocational training qualifi-

cation; under this arrangement, a young person can obtain up to a medium-level qualification.

- The "*contrat de qualification*" is a fixed-term employment contract lasting generally two years for those people who have experienced difficulty in finding a job. Training is provided under the "dual", i.e. alternating system "à la française", whereby the young people receive training at a training centre and are also allocated a trainer at their place of work.
- The "*contrat d'adaptation*" lasts from six to 12 months and also involves an alternating form of training. Young adults who need to supplement their existing qualifications receive an employment contract which allows them to familiarize themselves with and adapt to a specific job.
- The "*crédit formation individualisé*" is the sum of all these types of scheme and covers all the above-named individual measures. It is designed to enable young adults to find their own individual pathway to qualifications tailored to their personal learning circumstances. The process starts with vocational guidance and an assessment of the individual's existing qualifications. A young adult can then embark on one of the schemes described above to acquire a recognized vocational training qualification.

Recognition of vocational skills acquired. This regulation was introduced in France only two years ago and is still not widely applied. The purpose of the legislation is to enable partial certificates to be issued for examinations covering individual learning modules; this allows the young person to build up step by step to full certification; the second aim is the recognition of practical work performed on the job.

Certification procedures are in line with the state education system of diplomas, which thus exerts a considerable influence on initial and continuing vocational qualifications. The state has an important role to play, guaranteeing and monitoring the coherence of the certification system across the country and ensuring the coordination, equivalence and intelligibility of the final certificates and diplomas. Within the system of recognized diplomas and certificates there are now new forms of certificate issued by companies which describe in detail the theoretical content of the instruction provided and the tasks carried out by the young person during the training period.

Ruud Klarus (CIBB), s'Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands

The Netherlands are currently testing a system for the assessment and recognition of previously acquired skills and knowledge termed "Recognition of prior learning" (RPL). The system is also designed to help make diplomas issued by different vocational training providers understandable to employers. In the Netherlands there are three main reasons for introducing RPL:

- There are individuals who are in possession of vocational skills which are not recognized and certificated and who therefore have no access to areas of employment for which they are in actual fact qualified and no opportunities for further professional development.
- The plethora of vocational training courses offered by public and private providers in the Netherlands has led to a flood of diplomas and certificates, the importance of which it is no longer possible for employers to gauge. A standardized assessment system which covers both theoretical and practical qualifications could reduce the problem.
- Comparability of training qualifications issued by both public and private training providers renders superfluous the institutional integration of the two sectors.

RPL forms part of a broader reform of the education and training system currently under way in the Netherlands which is aimed at integrating theoretical and job-related training and introducing a flexible and open learning system on a modular basis incorporating the use of telecommunications. The purpose of the RPL system is to bring together the assessment of theoretical and practical qualifications which are currently treated separately by examining and assessing the qualifications required to carry out specific work tasks. The prime goal is less to reduce the dropout rate of young workers than to consolidate a system for lifelong learning and recognize the skills acquired in the work process. The assessment criteria applied by RPL need to be in line with those of the regular education and training system in order to avoid the creation of "second-class" certificates. Nevertheless, at the time the system was devised, it was also necessary to develop a method of assessment that took into account the fact that RPL candidates have acquired their training predominantly outside formal training courses.

The RPL assessment procedure does not cover the entire range of activities involved in a particular occupation; it assesses the qualifications required for a particular area of work in the context of a real work task. The stages of preparation, planning, execution and monitoring are treated as standardized components of the task (this corresponds roughly to the "Leittext" method of learning by discovery applied in the Federal Republic of Germany). Checklists are used to examine the technical and extra-technical skills required, including knowledge of method and transferred application. The systems offers individuals the chance to acquire a full vocational qualification outside formal training courses on the basis of an assessment of their vocational skills in different areas of work.

Under the RPL system employees can obtain vocational training qualifications in an open learning system tailored to individual needs.

Marinella Giovine (ISFOL), Rome

The situation in Italy differs from that in the other European countries, as the examples of France and the Netherlands show. The first difference is that in Italy vocational training provision is concentrated primarily on the initial vocational training sector, which accounts for 90% of training activity. Continuing vocational training for adults is of marginal importance in Italy's vocational training system.

The second difference concerns *certification*. The formal certificates relating to vocational skills acquired in school-based training courses are not very highly regarded in the employment market, not because of the quality of the training but because of the attitude of employers who do not generally attach much importance to the formal certificates issued by vocational schools. Employers judge the skills of young adults on the basis of their professional resumés, their prior experience and their attitude in relation to the day-to-day running of the company. The same does not apply, however, to training and jobs within the public sector.

I would like to discuss both the lack of interest on the part of companies and the lack of demand on the part of employees for continuing vocational training. We have a saying that "The best way to get work is by working" and this is certainly true. It is a young person's first work experience which guarantees long-

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term employment. It is very rare in Italy for a young person who is in employment to become unemployed. Nevertheless, a young adult's opportunities for vertical job mobility depend on his or her level of vocational training; in other words, young employees with a low level of training have little chance of professional advancement. This problem is insignificant, however, in comparison with the great difficulties experienced by juveniles and young adults in finding a first job. In Italy we have approximately one million unemployed young people; it is likely that this will still be the case in the year 2000 since the problem is one of structural unemployment. Thus we have a *considerable reservoir of skills* since 80% of these young unemployed people have a level of education equivalent to the German "Abitur" or upper secondary education certificate; some have a technical or a occupation-related "Abitur".

The low demand in companies for continuing vocational training is attributable to the fact that there is no lack of skills in the Italian employment market and companies generally find the skills they require. Since the introduction of a scheme to recompense firms for the settling-in period for young adults in a new job, complaints about the lack of skilled workers in the employment market have declined considerably. In the past, companies complained less about the lack of general knowledge, i.e. the basic qualifications of young people, than about their lack of knowledge of the working world.

There are two statutory instruments designed to promote the vocational integration of young adults which involve around 800,000 juveniles and young adults each year. The participants receive a two-year employment contract in a company. There is no set training programme, a matter which is left entirely to the company. There are no formal controls of what knowledge and skills are taught and no final examination. These training courses are designed primarily to pass on job-related knowledge and skills, i.e. the areas of job familiarization and adaptation, rather than to provide full-scale vocational training. For this reason we are reluctant in Italy to recognize the schemes formally as vocational training. Both in terms of labour market policy and from the point of view of companies, however, these instruments have proved to be highly effective, with 80% of those taking the courses finding employment at the end. The companies value the job familiarization training for which they themselves have been responsible and provide long-term employment for the trainees. The system makes efficient use of the structure of the Italian economy since most of the companies involved, whether in the industrial or service sector, are small and very small businesses which can provide

certain structural framework conditions for the job familiarization process which are not present in large companies.

In summary I would like to reiterate that there would be considerable potential at regional level to create flexible vocational training schemes for a variety of different target groups. The problem lies in the lack of demand. While there is a strong demand for initial vocational training for young people, originating in part from their families, the demand for continuing vocational training is low. Without the involvement of both sides of industry in this education and training policy issue, I feel that it will be extremely difficult to introduce a system of continuing vocational training in Italy.

Dr Peter-Werner Kloas (BIBB), Berlin

On-the-job Training: A Promising Way for Young Employees to Catch Up on Training Qualifications

In the Federal Republic of Germany between 10 and 14 per cent of young people leave the education and training system each year without a vocational qualification. According to estimates from the Federal Institute for Vocational Training, around 1.6 million people in the 20-30year-old age bracket alone have no vocational qualifications and are not undergoing training. The people in this group are subject to a high rate of unemployment and social decline. Traditional ways to catch up on training are of only limited relevance to them. Retraining is not an option for many since few can satisfy the formal entrance requirements laid down by the Employment Promotion Act or are able to cope with the workload within the timescale of the retraining period, which is much shorter than the normal training period. For unskilled or semi-skilled people who are in employment, retraining is not a feasible alternative since it entails their giving up their jobs.

The other option of obtaining a recognized vocational qualification by taking an external examination set by the chambers is likewise open to only a limited group of people. Entry requirements for an examination of this type demand at least six years relevant job experience and readiness to attend evening and week-

end courses to acquire the relevant theoretical knowledge. The majority of young, unskilled adults, however, have little aptitude for learning and because of their background and circumstances find it difficult to obtain vocational qualifications in this way.

Surveys carried out by the Federal Institute for Vocational Training reveal that between one quarter and one fifth of all unskilled and semi-skilled young people under the age of 30 are seriously interested in undergoing vocational training, but only if it can be tied in in terms of organization and curriculum with employment in the first or second employment market. For people who have difficulties with the school-oriented forms of learning in initial and continuing training, job-related learning is the form which best suits their learning circumstances. The results of the surveys also show that certain groups of unskilled and semi-skilled young people are particularly receptive to on-the-job training, in particular: the unemployed; young adults who have broken off training or who have taken part in job preparation schemes; people who have tried unsuccessfully to find a traineeship; unskilled and semi-skilled people of foreign nationality. Around three quarters of unskilled and semi-skilled people who want to undergo vocational training have already decided on particular occupations, predominantly in areas in which they have already gained some work experience. If there is to be any progress in reducing the numbers of young adults without vocational qualifications, it is essential to devise integrative training concepts which link employment and learning together.

Drawing on the findings of these surveys and the results of pilot projects and special programmes run by the state governments under labour market policy, a draft programme for the training of young adults with no vocational qualifications has been developed. The programme is based on the following criteria:

- On-the-job training and learning in courses need to be linked together in terms of organization and curriculum. The importance of the workplace as a learning environment is crucial.
- The training must culminate in a recognized qualification.
- In educational terms it is important to run the training courses on a modular basis, firstly in order to be able to link in with the prior work experience of the trainees but also so that the training forms a link in a chain in case the trainee is unable to obtain the qualification because the scheme does not run for long enough.
- The modules must be certificated in order to be able to define the qualification in relation to the recognized traineeship occupation.

- Remuneration must be based on the collective agreement, increasing in line with qualifications in order to create an incentive to learn.
- Trainees must receive individual counselling throughout the training and accompanying socio-pedagogic support.

Hopes that this draft scheme would be developed into a formal programme have remained largely unfulfilled, not because of educational reservations but on account of restrictive and steadily worsening funding conditions. All the current ways open to unskilled young people to catch up on vocational training qualifications in line with the above criteria are being disrupted by complicated and restrictive funding practices. One way out of the difficulty would be a federal programme which combines the provision of recognized training for young people without qualifications with an employment context. Since this form of vocational training linked with employment poses particular requirements in terms of content and organization, it is essential to continue research into the approaches tested in pilot projects and programmes run by the federal states (development of curricula for different learning venues, development of instructions for defining work processes in line with learning considerations, production of support media, testing of suitable procedures for certificating skills acquired, etc.). The Federal Institute for Vocational Training is backing efforts to speed up this process for appropriate pilot projects and to organize an exchange of information. A synopsis documenting progress to date with projects to provide training for young unqualified people in the job context is to be published shortly. This document will act as a common basis to enable those involved in the projects and potential "project makers" to exchange information. Even at this stage of the documentation process, it is possible to identify three types of scheme providing on-the-job training:

- Schemes in large companies which are undergoing restructuring and whose workforce consists of a large percentage of unskilled and semi-skilled workers. On-the-job training in this context often extends over a period of five years.
- Schemes in small and medium-size businesses based on a payroll subsidy of up to 80 %. In these cases the companies undertake to employ the employees in a training capacity for three years.
- Schemes within the second employment market, e.g. employment companies, which are structured similarly to the schemes in small and medium-size businesses.

Panel Discussion

Training Young Unskilled Workers: Recognition of Work Experience and Prior Learning

Panelists

Annie Bouder (CEREQ), Marseille; Dr Gerhard Eisfeld (Federal Ministry of Education and Science - BMBW), Bonn; Ruud Klarus (CIBB), s'Hertogenbosch; Dr Peter-Werner Kloas (Federal Institute for Vocational Training - BIBB), Berlin; Giovine Marinella (ISFOL), Rome; Reinhard Reiser (Chamber of crafts for Central Franconia), Nuremberg; Gunther Steffens (German Employees Union - DAG), Hamburg.

Moderator

Roland Matzdorf (Ministry for Employment), Health and Social Services, North Rhine-Westphalia, Düsseldorf

Rapporteur

Mona Granato, Brigitte Wolf (BIBB), Berlin

The discussion on the training of young unskilled workers and the recognition and certification of such measures concentrated on five main issues:

1. Are the measures to train young employees meeting a demand from employers?
2. Are traditional training concepts relevant to this target group or should a modular approach be adopted to existing recognized occupations?
3. In a modular approach, what is the relative importance of the different learning venues and what tasks do they perform?
4. What level of qualification can be attained within the framework of these measures and to what extent are partial qualifications which are below the level of recognized traineeship occupations accepted?
5. How can these measures be funded?

Demand on the part of employers

According to a survey carried out by BIBB/IAB, there is no demand within companies in the Federal Republic of Germany for workers with a level of training below that of the recognized traineeships; the position is somewhat different in the other European countries:

The Dutch representative pointed out that demand within companies was dependent on the economic situation within the country in question. When the labour market has a pool of skilled workers at a time of rising unemployment, workers with partial vocational qualifications stand little chance against those who are fully skilled; the situation changes as the employment rate increases.

According to the Italian representative, in her country qualifications obtained in school-based training courses are less highly regarded by employers when they recruit employees. Only in the public sector are they rated more highly. The most important selection criterion for companies is the prior work experience of the applicants. Nevertheless, it is extremely difficult for the approximately 20% of juveniles and young adults with poor school qualifications to gain entry to the job market.

In France the law provides various ways for young poorly qualified adults to catch up on qualifications. In addition, various branches of industry have created their own training schemes for this target group in line with their own requirements.

It became apparent in the course of the discussion that young adults without a vocational qualification need to acquire vocational skills.

Traditional training courses or a modular approach?

The concepts presented in the workshop for the training of young workers are predominantly geared to provide the target group with a recognized qualification, particularly in relation to initial vocational training. In terms of continuing vocational training, the certification of individual modules was also thought to be appropriate providing the individual modules were packaged together effectively to reflect employers' demands.

The discussion revealed that the Member States adopt different approaches to the recognition/certification of qualifications imparted in individual modules. The RPL assessment system in the Netherlands, for instance, is designed to recognize skills required to perform only limited tasks. France has a system which issues different levels of vocational certificates. In the Federal Republic of Germany a modular approach to training unskilled young people is regarded primarily as a matter of sound educational policy. Various approaches to modular training have been tested successfully in pilot projects, but always with the aim of awarding a qualification in a recognized traineeship occupation. For a target group of disadvantaged young people, this generally entails an extended training period. An abridged period of training such as is applied, for example, in the case of worker training in Germany or assistant training in the Netherlands, gives the trainees only limited chances on the employment market. In the opinion of the representatives of these countries, abridged training courses should always lead on to optional continuation courses.

It was also reported that linking work and learning had proved to be an effective method for this target group. This is borne out by the pilot projects and special training programmes carried out in the Federal Republic of Germany. Attempts to introduce the approach on a more widespread basis have been thwarted, however, by the restrictive funding conditions of the employment administration.

Vocational training at different learning venues?

All those involved in the discussion agreed on the relevance of the "firm", i.e. both large companies and small and medium-size businesses, as a venue for the training of young adults. Once again, however, speakers endorsed the use of an alternating form of vocational training. The school or training establishment has the important task of systematizing the training, imparting the necessary theoretical

element and providing the necessary socio-pedagogic back-up. The system followed by the Italian model of providing job-related knowledge and skills solely in the company context was thought by other countries to be educationally undesirable.

Acceptance of partial qualifications in the employment market

A further item of discussion related to the extent to which partial vocational qualifications are accepted in the various national employment markets. Practice obviously varies from country to country. While France operates a system of graduated vocational qualifications and certification of the individual stages of training, in Germany the trade unions in particular reject a stage-wise approach to vocational training. Here a multi-level system of training qualifications, as was in operation in a few sectors until just a few years ago, has been largely discontinued. The German representatives expressed the view that vocational training provision should always culminate in a recognized vocational qualification. The reason for this is the practice in Germany of linking vocational qualifications with the collective bargaining system. Nevertheless, it was conceded that it was certainly preferable in the context of training unskilled young people to recognize, for example, seven out of ten modules than to have no certification for parts of a training programme successfully completed. In the Netherlands the acceptance of partial qualifications is a question of the manpower supply. In order to safeguard freedom of movement of workers within the internal market in Europe, it was agreed that partial certificates must be both transparent and comparable.

Funding the training

It also emerged from the discussion that arrangements for funding vocational training measures for young untrained adults vary between the EU Member States. In Germany measures of this kind are funded predominantly by the government and industry in tandem. In other EU Member States sole responsibility for funding lies with the government. With reference to government-funded measures it was reported that the complicated funding provisions covering employment programmes on the one hand and training programmes on the other produce disadvantages. Only by linking the two types of programme can the target group be

addressed effectively and rationally. The Dutch representative reported that the first attempt in his country to involve industry in funding measures for unskilled young people foundered some time ago. In Italy it was reported that businesses receive compensation from the government for their measures to integrate young adults into working life.

It was clear that the European Union programmes are used in all the Member States to supplement national programmes to train young unskilled workers. All those present called for a networking of national and European programmes to rationalize the funding of these measures.

Workshop C

"European Vocational Training Research"

In this workshop, results from European vocational training research programmes provided the basis for discussion and the formulation of conclusions regarding training policy. The focus was on the present and future role played by companies in initial and continuing vocational training against the backdrop of identifiable challenges arising from developments concerning training demand and increasingly global economic competition.

Workshop C 1

Prospects for Company-Based Initial Vocational Training in Europe

Introduction Paper

Dr Jochen Reuling (BIBB), Berlin

Company involvement in the training of specialized staff differs greatly within the European Union. In most of the Member States, the predominant form of training is full-time schooling (often incorporating traineeship in companies). In Denmark, Germany, Austria and Switzerland, training is carried out in dual-track programmes. This type of training is characterized by an alternation between training phases in companies, often supplemented by supra-company training sites, and phases in part-time vocational schools and is referred to as alternance vocational training. The Netherlands also offers this type of training to a significant degree, but instruction in full-time vocational schools predominates. In the United Kingdom, the situation is somewhat more complicated. There, company involvement in training young people is considerable but is often limited to individual training modules. Further institutions providing training are private or public training centres and vocational schools.

An analysis of the *development prospects* for the various types of vocational training, especially in-company training, must include a detailed study of their socioeconomic foundations as well as the role played by those responsible for vocational training. National vocational training systems can be broken down into *three basic types* depending on the role played by the state:[1]

1 Greinert, Wolf-Dietrich: "Systeme beruflicher Bildung im internationalen Vergleich - Versuch einer Klassifizierung", in: Bundesminister für Bildung und Wissenschaft (Hrsg.), Innovative Methoden in der beruflichen Bildung, Reihe Bildung - Wissenschaft - International 1/90, Bonn, 1990.

- The *market model*, whereby the state is generally not involved in the regulation of vocational training processes, opting instead to leave this up to the responsible vocational training institutions and to the companies as clients. Examples of this model can be found in the UK and the USA.
- The *school model*, in which the state is generally solely responsible for planning, organizing and monitoring vocational training. As active state involvement intensifies, vocational schools increasingly become the exclusive vehicles for vocational training processes, and the potential role of companies declines. The vocational training systems in France and Italy are relevant examples.
- The *state-regulated market model*, according to which the state, with varying degrees of involvement, establishes the general parameters for the activities of private training institutions, especially companies.

Realistically speaking, however, all existing national vocational training systems are variants and combinations of these basic types.

An analysis of dual systems illustrates most clearly the advantages, structural problems and development prospects of in-company vocational training. In comparison to full-time school training systems, dual systems have the *advantage* that central company resources, such as knowledge of operations, immediate exposure to the real working world, and financial means, can be used for training purposes. This can lead to the following positive effects:

- The close link between the training programme and the future place of work facilitates the rapid adaptation of vocational training to changing quantitative and qualitative demands made by the economy.
- The combination of training *for* the profession with training *through* the profession, the associated pedagogic opportunities and socialization effects (learning active professional conduct, the seriousness of the training process, etc.) as well as integration into the company during the training phase can all be viewed as factors that facilitate young people's transition from training to the working world.
- Companies' private commitment to training means that costs are saved that otherwise would have to be covered by the state.
- Companies are able to reduce expenditures related to initial job instruction and familiarization periods, personnel recruiting and fluctuation costs because they can minimize the risk of making bad personnel decisions, and because of the opportunity to select the best trainees as long-term and qualified staff for the company.

Within general parameters established jointly by the state and the two sides of industry, dual training systems operate to a more or less significant degree on the principle of self-regulation by private companies. Of course, this means that a prerequisite for dual training systems is a particularly high level of willingness to shoulder responsibility and carry out training programmes. It is necessary to ensure that private companies genuinely provide training in the collective and societal interest and refrain from taking into consideration possible short-term, company-specific cost/benefit advantages even in difficult economic times. This is especially true with regard to the range of company training services offered, investment in training personnel and infrastructure, the breadth and specialization of training programmes and the ratio of learning phases to phases of productive work carried out by trainees in the company. So, *one* important precondition for the smooth functioning of dual training programmes is that a sufficient number of companies demonstrate a lasting commitment to the provision of training and that they structure their training services on the basis of similar standards. If that is not the case, one is confronted with the problem that companies opt not to offer training and instead participate in the training services of other firms. This "free-rider behaviour" is a major obstacle to the development of dual training systems in a number of countries.

Another prerequisite for the proper functioning of dual training systems is that they must be attractive in comparison with full-time school vocational training programmes or with advanced general training courses. This raises two further issues. First of all, in-company training courses must be sufficiently diversified so as to satisfy the heterogenous learning requirements and interests of the largest possible number of youngsters. Secondly, the relative attractiveness of in-company training courses also depends on what kind of prospects their graduates can expect regarding income and social status compared to peers pursuing rival (vocational) training programmes. This touches on questions such as the value of in-company training and of graduation certificates on the labour market and the prospects for continuing education and career opportunities open to those who complete dual vocational training courses.

Striking a balance between the interests of individual companies and the needs of the overall economy and society, and the competition between alternative educational paths are two relevant *areas of tension*. These can lead to sizeable problems not only in existing dual systems. They also make it difficult to expand in-company vocational training in systems based primarily on full-time school voca-

tional training or those in which general education traditionally has a higher status.

In the example of *France* it is interesting to look at the conceptual approaches applied in the eighties in an effort to expand in-company vocational training in a primarily school-based training system and which factors turned out to be the decisive obstacles. In *Austria*, the dual system enjoys a high status similar to that in Germany. The main differences are to be found in the fact that training for commercial professions in Austria traditionally takes place in schools. Furthermore, in the technico-industrial area there is increasingly stiff competition between dual and full-time school vocational training courses, both of which lead to comparable vocational qualifications.

Against the backdrop of the situation in France and Austria and bearing in mind German experiences, open questions and the prospects for the further advancement of in-company vocational training in other Member States of the European Union are to be discussed. Issues include:

1. Which basic institutional elements of in-company and dual vocational training have proven their worth and contribute to ensuring those programmes' continued existence?
   - What role do the two sides of industry play in planning and decision-making processes regarding training policy?
   - What is the relationship between state regulation and self-regulation by companies and schools as training institutions? In what proportions do private and public sources contribute to financing?
   - How might one assess the allocation of tasks and the cooperation between companies and vocational schools?
2. Are there developments in schools and the economy that render the expansion of in-company vocational training necessary?
3. What developments endanger the continued existence of dual training systems?
   - What tendencies threaten to curtail companies' willingness to provide training?
   - How can one preserve or enhance the attractiveness of in-company vocational training in comparison to full-time school vocational training or to advanced general or post-secondary training courses?

Presentations

Trends in Corporate Involvement in Initial and Continuing Training: France and Austria as Examples

René Lassere (CIRAC), Paris

School-based and company-based vocational training are becoming increasingly integrated in France, though the conditions for integration are difficult there. The difficulties can be traced back to the French educational tradition and the architecture of the French education system. Company-based vocational training has traditionally held a secondary position in France. Since the Republican schools of the last century there has been a predominance of general education within the entire schooling system, and this predominance has persisted and indeed continued to gain ground until today. Two thirds of each student cohort study for the baccalauréat examination. By contrast, only one third opt for vocational courses, and of these only a smallish fraction are vocational training courses with a "dual" structure, i.e. training on an apprenticeship basis. Expressed in figures: a cohort of 800,000 students includes only 100,000 or 12% who opt for an apprenticeship; a further 15% opt for full-time school-based vocational education. This statistical breakdown is the result of a particular attitude towards vocational training or indeed of a political consensus to the effect that raising the general level of education is a political priority required in order to accommodate structural and technological change and meet the higher skill levels needed in a modern economy. This means, as expressed in a goal set by one French minister of education, that some 80% of each student cohort in France should obtain the baccalauréat qualification by the year 2000. At the moment, the figure has reached some 60%. It is doubtful whether the 80% goal will be reached, but this target figure indicates the direction to be taken.

For all that, the degree to which young people in France could be integrated into the labour market did not improve significantly in the 1980s. On the contrary, youth unemployment in France proved to be resistant to most of the many efforts made to reduce it. Some 22% of young people under 25 years of age in France are unemployed; youth unemployment is thus a grave societal problem.

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Given this situation, France recognized the need to develop vocational training tracks of a "dual" nature. Since the early 1980s, various training measures have been developed for young people without a school-leaving certificate or vocational qualification with a view to giving them an on-the-job vocational training and thus facilitating their integration into adult society and working life. Some, but only some of these measures have proved to be successful. Nevertheless they have reinforced the view that it is necessary to provide for dual-type training tracks within the education and training system. The initial efforts in this direction consisted of measures to expand and improve the existing apprenticeship system. The year 1987 brought a reform of the apprenticeship system in France which aimed at making an apprenticeship a stepping stone towards higher qualifications rather than leading only to a skilled worker qualification. The reform, however, was only partially successful. Essentially, the apprenticeship system has remained stable. The other possibility explored was a partial "dualization" of school-based vocational education. A new training format was developed, the "formation alternance", which is a combination of school-based and company-based training. This approach has been successful to some extent insofar as it has led to the introduction of new training tracks, e.g. the "baccalauréat professionnel". This involves a baccalauréat examination with a strong vocational component which is currently being passed by some 50,000 students. The students undergo a "dual" training insofar as some four months of their two-and-a-half year training course are spent in a company. Other elements of a "dual" system introduced included numerous practical training periods to accompany the technical instruction and numerous partnerships between schools and companies. In this way an increasing number of young people who had opted for a vocational education have been guided towards training of a "dual" type. Nonetheless, these "dual" training formats available in France have little in common with the dual vocational training system practised in Germany because instead of being a temporally dovetailed combination of in-company training and school-based instruction they involve a succession of periods of in-company training and periods of school-based instruction, with the latter still playing the predominant role.

This development towards dual forms of vocational training was also reinforced by the fact that the regions acquired important powers and competences in the field of vocational training in connection with the central state's policy of decentralization. The regions have been particularly keen to promote links between schools and industry. The strength of these linkages, however, differs from region

to region. But to take the examples of the major industrial regions in France, the Rhône-Alpes region and the Ile-de-France region, these have made major efforts to promote closer relations between schools and industry.

The efforts to develop dual types of vocational training and involve companies in its provision, however, have run up against many obstacles, particularly ideological obstacles because there still persists in France a political consensus to the effect that the principal role in vocational training should be played by the state. The social partners and also the various other social forces call for the state to bear responsibility for and supervise the entire education system, including vocational training, in order to ensure that training is not compromised by short-term corporate interests. Moreover, there are also sociocultural obstacles to developing dual training tracks because vocational education and apprenticeship are associated with a low level of social prestige in France and tend to attract young people who cannot continue their general education beyond lower secondary level. Also problematic are structural and financial obstacles because the traditional predominance of the state in the education sector means that the majority of schools are publicly funded. Introducing dual training tracks modelled on the German system would therefore signify not only a reform of the system insofar as personnel, material

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resources and school premises are concerned but also financial changes to allow employers to contribute to a budget which has hitherto been a publicly funded budget. In a scenario involving a redistribution of powers and competences, employers would also have to shoulder some of the burdens – a prospect which invokes counterarguments based on financial considerations because of the already high level of wage costs and secondary payroll costs in France.

This summarizes the overall situation and the development of in-company training in France in the 1980s.

Maria Hofstätter (ÖIBF), Vienna

I will describe the situation in Austria by discussing the following aspects: the development and present situation of apprenticeship training and the advantages and problems of the dual system – and I have deliberately chosen the term "problems" here in preference to "disadvantages". Finally I will examine some possible prospects for in-company traineeships. Let me make it clear from the outset that the apprenticeship system in Austria has a structure similar to that of the German system, though it tends to be more centred on the small industry sector than in Germany.

During the 1970s some industrial sociologists claimed that automated manufacturing systems could be operated without a skilled workforce. This hypothesis has since been refuted. The availability of highly skilled workers is essential, even in automated manufacturing. In the past, management personnel started their careers on the bottom rung of the ladder as apprentices and then worked their way upwards through a continuous process of selection. Today, only in a few exceptional cases would one find management personnel in Austria who had started their careers as clerical apprentices. In other words, a clerical apprentice is hardly likely today to become a bank manager. My first question here is therefore: Does it have to be the case that career prospects are opened up only or predominantly by schools? My second question is: Can and should apprenticeship equal the post-lower secondary schools in the career prospects they open up to young people? I am referring here first and foremost to skilled white-collar and blue-col-

lar occupations. My colleague will be examining the case of the self-employed in due course.

The high birth rates of the 1960s ensured a more or less adequate supply of youngsters wanting to train for a skilled occupation until the 1980s. Today, however, there is increasing evidence that young people are more inclined to opt for continuing their education beyond lower secondary level than to start a dual traineeship. That young people are quite right to believe that they will do better by remaining in general education beyond the lower secondary level is borne out by comparison of the situation of persons having completed a traineeship on the one hand and persons with a baccalaureate or higher education qualification on the other. In Austria today, it is a post-lower secondary education which is more likely to pave the way to a higher life income and a career with advancement prospects. The remuneration tables of the public service illustrate this distinction well: they provide for A-grade, B-grade and C-grade posts, the A-grade and B-grade posts being reserved for persons with a baccalaureate or higher education qualification and attracting a considerably higher remuneration.

The dual system is today facing a trilemma: firstly, demographic constraints, secondly, the trend among young people to proceed to higher education, and thirdly the companies which could provide traineeship places but which prefer, in times of economic difficulties, to cut back their training budget and tend to concentrate the cuts on costly, high-quality traineeships. A few figures to illustrate my point: analysis of Austria's current 16-year old population shows that approximately 44% of them are commencing a traineeship, 54% are continuing their schooling and only about 2% will obtain no vocational qualification at all. The last figure rises if one analyses older cohorts as it then has to take account of the high drop-out rate from post-lower secondary education. The inflow of newly qualified skilled workers differs from one industry to another. Declining inflow numbers are in fact currently bringing about a negative growth rate in the skilled worker population. The period 1983 to 1997 will show a decline of approximately 45% in industry and commerce, a slightly less pronounced decline in the tourism sector and a relatively slight fall-back in the crafts sector.

A few comments on the advantages of a dual system. The first and undisputed advantage is the combination of theoretical instruction at school and its practical application at the workplace. This combination is of considerable pedagogic merit and allows the trainee to become familiar with real-life operations at work. The second advantage is that a recognized vocational qualification is a passport to a

job in which the skills learned will be employed. The third advantage is the integrative effect of a traineeship: it allows young people for whom the education system makes inadequate provision to become integrated into adult society and working life. It is also particularly effective in integrating ethnic minorities into their host society. Austria has been very successful in integrating its young ethnic population. More than 10% of all young people commencing a traineeship are non-nationals. Another problem which is being relatively successfully tackled in Austria is that of youth unemployment. A sufficient number of jobs are available for young people who have obtained a traineeship qualification. There is no special provision in Austria for either part-time jobs or low-pay contracts for young people. One problem in the traineeship sector is that many of the small and medium companies providing training are not able to offer sufficiently high-quality training. As stated above, the attractiveness of a traineeship ultimately depends on the employment prospects it offers. As the statistics show, persons with a skilled worker qualification earn less than persons holding an upper secondary or higher education qualification. There remains much to be done here with regard to structural permeability within the system and to advancement to a higher position and a higher salary if the dual system is to maintain its position under the pressure exerted by demographic developments and the preference for remaining in general education.

Dr Arthur Schneeberger (IBW), Vienna

I would like to add some comments from the scientific viewpoint to what the previous speaker reported. Let me take up the point made about young people's access to initial vocational training at the age of 14 or 15 years and the problem of the high drop-out rate which has become very acute over the past decade. One could approach these issues by asking what 15-year-olds opt for, what training tracks do they choose? This, however, is not an approach which I recommend. I would prefer a different approach and ask: What is at the end of the initial training track, what qualifications will young people have when they reach the age of 18 or 19 years? My focus is thus on the outcomes of education, the result at the end of initial training rather than on young people's wishes, it is on the attractive-

ness of education rather than on the architecture of the state education system. Approximately 79% of young people hold a recognized educational qualification. The remaining 21% are accounted for by young people who leave compulsory general education without any formal qualification. We hope that this figure can be further lowered in future. But to return to the 79%, we find that the dual training system accounts for just over one half of all successfully completed training courses, namely 41%. Its main rival is of course the training track which offers both a vocational training and access to higher education: school-based higher technical and vocational education. This is a very attractive training track which is viewed very positively by parents and is being heavily promoted by educational counsellors. It can be regarded as having come out as the winner of the expansion of education which has taken place over the past twenty years. But it must also be admitted that only 16% opt for courses at higher technical and vocational schools, this despite the fact that, unlike in many other European countries, these schools enjoy a very high level of prestige in Austria. This training track has a status at least as high as the academic upper secondary track because it has high standards and has so far been highly selective.

We have heard that Austria has a very serious drop-out problem. This is mitigated, however, by the fact that approximately 60% of school drop-outs who leave education because they do not like school or cannot meet the standards required or would simply prefer to do something more practical in fact move on to a traineeship within the dual system. If this alternative were not available, our situation would be very grave indeed.

A further point the significance of the dual system within the employment system. A few statistics to illustrate that significance: Firstly, 89% of skilled workers received their training in the form of a traineeship. Secondly, 75% of shop-floor management personnel, i.e. master craftsmen and foremen, were trained within the dual system. Thirdly, 54% of self-employed persons running their own businesses in the industrial sector originally trained within the dual system; the percentage figure is even higher for small and medium entrepreneurs, especially in the crafts sector, industry and tourism. With such a large number of people with a traineeship background, it is hardly surprising that 1.5 million of the total workforce of 3.5 million have been through the dual system. Differentiations in terms of performance are less readily visible at the outset of than during the course of their careers. The differences in career paths have a lesser impact on statistical means than on school differentiation systems.

Finally, a comment on the future of the dual system. I believe it to be very important not to overdramatize the problems resulting from the declining birth rate. In Austria we now have exactly 33% fewer young people of the age under discussion here. The number of trainees and the number of companies providing training have declined at a commensurate rate. To my mind it would be wrong to interpret the fact that Austrians produced fewer children fifteen years ago as signifying a crisis for the dual system. It is important to remain calm and try to acknowledge the fact that a large percentage of all youngsters are still undergoing training in the dual system.

Panel Discussion

What Future Does In-Company Training Have in Europe and How can it be Made More Attractive?

Panelists

Heinz-Peter Benetreu (DGB), Düsseldorf; Maria Hofstätter (ÖIBF), Vienna; Manfred Kremer (BMBW), Bonn; René Lassere (CIRAC), Paris; H.C.M. van der Linden (Ministerie van Onderwijs en Wetenschappen), Netherlands; Dr Georg Piskaty (IBW), Vienna; Dr Arthur Schneeberger (IBW), Vienna; Ingeborg Weegmann (BDA), Cologne;

Moderator

Chris Hayes (The Prospect Centre), London

Rapporteurs

Dr Gisela Dybowski-Johannson, Dr Jochen Reuling (BIBB), Berlin

The discussion on the future of in-company training focused on four main questions:

- What are the main obstacles to expanding in-company training?
- How can dual training tracks maintain or raise their attractiveness vis-à-vis full-time school-based training tracks?
- How can the employers' commitment to training be strengthened or maintained at its already high standard?

- Will the dual system be succesful in adapting to the needs of the post-industrial society?

What are the main obstacles to expanding in-company training?

One of the main obstacles to expanding in-company training in many countries of Europe is the low social status attached to such forms of training. It opens up fewer earnings and career prospects than a school-based, general academic education. The attractiveness of in-company training is further undermined when, as in France, educational policy explicitly promotes a high standard of general education as a policy objective. Although training within a work context has some considerable advantages, e.g. increased motivation to learn and lower training costs, many societies prefer to opt for more costly and circuitous routes via school and university courses. This is clearly the case in France, where dual training forms – albeit still in a somewhat unsystematic manner – have been introduced at higher education level. One already recognized problem here, however, is that the training is relatively costly and that graduates from such courses are often unable to find work in the fields for which they have been trained.

Dual training tracks may also find themselves facing competition from the trend to increase the number of places at higher vocational schools offering a qualification which is both marketable within the employment system and entitles the holder to direct access to higher education. As the example of the higher technical and vocational schools in Austria shows, however, the situation does not lend itself to any generalizing judgement. Although the past decade has brought a strong increase in the number of places at such schools, as far as the industrial sector is concerned the young people graduating from these schools have not displaced the skilled workers and master craftsmen who had undergone training within the dual system. For quite irrespective of the fact that these school-based training courses have drop-out rates of approximately 40%, the majority of young people who complete the course subsequently seek a place in higher education. In Austria's commercial sector, by contrast, there is genuine competition between the five-year full-time school-based training course and the corresponding dual-system traineeship. But here again, some 50 to 60% of all young men who complete the school-based training course proceed to higher education. The corresponding figure for female students is noticeably lower.

Expanding in-company training at the initial vocational training level could find itself constrained by an increasingly rapid expansion of continuing vocational training, an option which has already been chosen in many countries of Europe and is usually intended to compensate for the shortcomings of the initial vocational training system. There is some doubt, however, whether and if so to what extent such an option can be a more efficient and less costly way of providing a reliable supply of skilled workers – in other words whether and to what extent continuing training can compensate for initial training and thereby relativize the latter's importance. The example of France, where in-company continuing training has been systematically promoted by companies to compensate for the shortcomings of initial training, has proved, in the final analysis, to be a relatively costly way of solving these companies' skill requirement problems. The companies concerned have had to release staff for the period of their training, thereby incurring considerable indirect costs, and they have also thereby created a hiatus between continuing training and in-company manpower development schemes. A further problem for companies in this respect is the need, in view of the high costs thereby incurred, to rationalize continuing training provision to within the limits of their financial possibilities.

Germany has decisively rejected any expansion of continuing training where it is provided to the detriment of initial training. The general consensus is that all young people who so wish should have the opportunity of undergoing a high-quality initial vocational training meeting state-recognized standards. The initial and continuing training system should therefore be improved and expanded on the basis of greater flexibility to accommodate skill-upgrade and career advancement schemes.

Ideas for enhancing the attractiveness of in-company training

Possibilities for enhancing, or in the case of German-speaking countries and Denmark, for sustaining the attractiveness of dual-type training tracks were identified mainly in establishing equivalence between dual training tracks and full-time school-based vocational or general education. This signifies that dual training tracks would have to give access to the same educational choices and career opportunities as other types of education and training track. The Netherlands reported having some interesting projects in this respect: these projects aim to make the standard of dual training equal to that of full-time school-based voca-

tional education. This would enable young people holding a traineeship qualification to enter specialized forms of higher education. This access facility, which is to be anchored in legislation in 1996, is hoped to raise the appeal of in-company training schemes in the Netherlands and could ultimately lead to a harmonization – in the sense of established equivalence – of the two types of training track. In Germany, the problem of safeguarding the attractiveness of dual traineeships is regarded as being best tackled by creating more facilities for a broader-based range of continuing training and gearing these opportunities to systematically build up on the existing dual traineeship system. This would involve developing a transparent, tightly-meshed network of high-quality continuing training opportunities nationwide which would be open to the highest possible number of persons holding the traineeship qualification. If the education and career prospects opened up by such continuing training are to be readily apparent, this would also presuppose that the problem of certification is solved in advance. Austrian employers also stressed that closer interlinkages between initial and continuing vocational training automatically raise the question of funding. The state makes no contribution towards continuing training in Austria. Thought should therefore be given to the extent to which it might be desirable to divert state funding from initial training to continuing training.

Strengthening employers' commitment to training – is a modification of the funding system necessary?

The success of dual-type training models depends on the employers' readiness to invest in initial training and provide an adequate number of traineeship places. The supply of in-company traineeship places, particularly in large companies, has declined in Germany and Austria over the past few years. German employers have attributed the decline in the number of traineeship places offered to the cutback in manpower numbers in large companies over the same period. They pointed out that there has been no decline in the number of traineeship places available in the craft sector. German employers also stressed that large companies are under particular pressure to retain their former trainees once they have completed their training: declining to do so would not only lead to fiercer public criticism of the dual system but also compromise the company's prestige. For these reasons, and also because cost-cutting measures are increasingly affecting their initial and continuing training budgets, more and more large companies in particular are depart-

ing from their former practice of providing training for more young people than they would actually require themselves.

Concepts for counteracting this development by means of a change in the funding mechanisms for initial vocational training, however, were rejected by the representatives of both government authorities and employers in Germany. They argue that the funding model based on a levy to be imposed on all employers – the model favoured by the trade unions – would presuppose a levy of an inordinate scale if all the costs of in-company training were thereby to be met. Such a levy would therefore not result in an increase in the supply of traineeship places. Moreover, a levy system such as that practised in France would give companies the possibility of buying exoneration from their responsibility to provide training. German government policy maintains that companies should continue to bear responsibility for providing initial vocational training, a premise which automatically assigns companies the responsibility for financing such training. Only thus, it is argued, would companies remain willing, in the longer term, to provide a sufficient number of traineeship places. The German government authorities concede, however, that there is a need to intensify the discussion with companies on the long-term benefits of in-company training and to measure these against short-term cost calculations.

The Austrian employers were likewise adamant in rejecting a generalized levy system, arguing that this would either help preserve outdated structures or tempt employers to offer training courses for which there is no demand. The German trade unions, however, stressed that in view of the decline in the number of traineeship places on offer, there is a need to reactivate the funding debate of the 1970s, firstly because of the already predictable shortage of skilled manpower and secondly because of the "easy way out" opted for by many companies, namely to poach young skilled workers from other companies in preference to training their own workforce.

Other European countries, for example the Netherlands, also operate levy systems for financing in-company initial vocational training. The funds collected, which are administrated by the state, employers' federations and trade unions, are mainly used for taking counteractive measures at national level in times of economic recession.

The future of the dual system in the post-industrial society

The final point discussed was the future of dual training systems in the light of the transition from industrial societies to post-industrial or information societies. Will dual systems be successful in adjusting to change on a scale similar to that associated with the transition from the craft society to the industrial society? Or, with respect to the national system variants: how well will a dual system such as that in Germany or Austria, a school-based system such as that in France, and a loosely structured system such as that in the United Kingdom or the USA cope with this transition process? What mechanisms exist for modifying and improving the existing vocational training systems to ensure their survival? What innovations are needed to make sure that they can survive? That this is not merely an academic question but indeed a concrete problem became clear from a contribution from the Austrian delegation: the sectors where the White Paper of the European Union, for example, identifies new prospects for economic growth and employment are those for which only very few dual-type traineeships have hitherto been developed, for example in the health and community care sector, in recreation and culture, environmental protection, transport and energy, biotechnology and biochemistry, process technology, commerce, and computer technology.

Nonetheless, the German and Austrian delegations considered dual vocational training systems to be capable, in principle, of adjusting to tackle the challenges of the future. Not only have Germany and Austria been successful in adapting their dual training systems to cope with the transition from the craft society to the industrial society, these countries also have favourable contextual conditions for developing new dual-type traineeships in the growth sectors of the future. The German delegation stressed that the dual training system is designed to be particularly responsive to new developments and therefore has very favourable prospects of survival. One requirement pointed out, however, was that companies and vocational schools will have to work in closer cooperation in the future. The impact of modern media technologies, it was pointed out, will be much stronger in future on the continuing training sector. This development will open up new possibilities of giving continuing training a much more strongly integrated presence in corporate activities.

The French delegation also expressed the view that the transformation of national vocational training systems should not or indeed must not involve any hiatuses. Dual systems had great prospects for the future because they are best equipped for combining a knowledge of theory with an understanding of the stra-

tegic practical skills needed for work. This combination, it was reported, is important, a finding which indicates that school-based vocational training systems will have to be more intensively "dualized" in the future. Dual systems, on the other hand, would have to be made more flexible in the upward direction, i.e. combine a more advanced understanding of theory with practical skills.

A similar future was also predicted by the delegation of the Netherlands. As here, however, many problems arise and are tackled at the regional level, new arrangements involving both school-based and in-company vocational training should be sought more at the regional than at the national level.

Workshop C 2

Continuing Training and Company Organization Development in Europe

Introduction Paper

Dr Edgar Sauter (BIBB), Berlin

New organizational and production concepts and streamlining strategies ("lean management") are asserting themselves throughout Europe and around the world. The main characteristics of this development are well-known: dismantling of Tayloristic forms of labour organization, integration of tasks, comprehensive operational approaches, group work, flattening out hierarchies, new participation processes and staff rights to co-decision-making.

This development is linked with far-reaching changes concerning training requirements. The reintegration of formerly separated labour functions places great demands on specialists with regard to self-regulation and individual responsibility. Comprehensive operational approaches postulate that it is up to the employee to ensure the planning, implementation and quality control of a given assignment. Due to the expansion of individuals' fields of action, personal initiative and the ability to exert independent influence on the task at hand are imperative. Successful group work depends on sharpened abilities to cooperate and communicate.

Changes in labour organization not only give rise to new and greater training requirements; they also go hand in hand with changing learning opportunities and learning necessities within the work process. More complex and more demanding learning is becoming possible at one's place of work. This is especially clear when one looks at the example of group work. Coordination processes, rotation to various work stations, representing the group vis-à-vis third parties, and bolstered

participation all develop the group's learning potential and open the door to higher quality training and training processes.

Empirical studies show that in addition to classical continuing training activities (courses of instruction, classes, seminars), training forms with close links to the workplace are becoming more important (e.g. orientation by one's superiors, job familiarization programmes for new staff, quality enhancement groups). The repertoire of available in-company continuing training methods is expanded still further by self-regulated staff learning processes based on correspondence courses, books, videos and computer programmes. In this context, the role of the personnel involved in continuing training is changing. Trainers are increasingly becoming promoters of organization development; executives are also fulfilling continuing training functions for their staff. Growing cost pressure is forcing many companies to convert their continuing education divisions into independent profit-centres.

The processes of company organization development outlined above can be observed across the globe and affect first and foremost the role of in-company and non-company continuing training as well as the structuring of career paths. An international comparison of these processes must involve two aspects above all. First, developments observed to date in the realm of company streamlining and organizational concepts are to a certain extent contradictory and ambivalent. Given the variance in implementation and expansion of new production and organization concepts, one can expect that for years to come new and traditional concepts will coexist, and training and labour structures will continue to be heterogenous in nature. Second, the new trends in organization development will unfold within differing national training and employment systems. National trends in in-company continuing training are being studied in the CEDEFOP project "In-company continuing training strategies and the training effects of operational organization".

A Franco-German comparison of continuing training for the master craftsman and technician levels illustrates what kind of consequences different forms of continuing training can have for company labour organization and for personnel development. In the Federal Republic of Germany, access to lower and mid-level leadership positions (e.g. master craftsman, technician) is gained through skilled worker advancement with the help of initial training, learning through experience and regulated continuing training. This traditional training path is relatively stable and attractive. However, as the new organizational and production concepts outlined above make headway, the traditional paths up to the master craftsman and

technician levels will be subjected to dual pressures. On the one hand, the flattening-out of hierarchical structures achieved by scaling back leadership levels will bring about a reduction in advancement opportunities. And on the other hand, a number of companies are now attempting to replace traditional master craftsman and technician positions with graduates of specialized post-secondary schools or directly from below with highly qualified specialists. If this trend were to gain general acceptance, a result could be the disappearance of "bridge qualification groups" that have ensured communication and cooperation between the engineers and regular workers. Because bridge groups help to develop a common language among the entire staff, their importance regarding cooperation in the company can hardly be overstated. The consequences of an extensive loss of these bridge groups were elucidated by French examples in the comparative study. In France, the "back-door hiring" of technicians (of various levels), primarily with a school education, is more prevalent than in the Federal Republic of Germany. One especially noteworthy repercussion is the hoarding of information by the various qualification groups; this creates barriers to successful communication which have a negative effect on product quality and productivity. Hopes for an increase in productivity thanks to the engineers' higher qualification levels can thus be dampened because of communication and cooperation difficulties between the various staff groups.

Using the results of the Franco-German comparative study as a springboard, the discussion was to revolve around a number of questions and perspectives that have to do with the correlation between continuing vocational training and company organizational development. Above all:

1. In what ways are the requirements and responsibilities for mid-range qualification personnel (master craftsman, technician) being transformed due to changing technico-organizational framework conditions ("lean management"/"lean production")?
   - W th which workers/qualifications will mid-level company positions be filled in the future?
   - What practical knowledge is presently available?
2. What implications does company organizational development (under the heading of "lean management") have for the various forms of continuing training?
   - Which forms of workplace-oriented continuing education are taking hold?
   - What factors are responsible for the trend towards learning at the workplace?
   - What role does cost pressure play, for example?
3. What trends in in-company continuing education are appearing on the horizon?
   - What are the limits to learning at the workplace?
   - What is the significance for continuing vocational training of schemes leading to a recognized qualification?

Presentation

Ingrid Drexel (Institute for Social Science Research, Munich)

The Implications of Different Continuing Training Systems for Corporate Work Organization and Personnel Management Policy – A Franco-German Comparison

Introduction

Europe's continuing training systems are very differently structured. Something can be learnt from these differences and their implications if they are carefully analysed on the basis of international comparative studies. This paper takes the example of a comparison between France and Germany and concentrates on the correlation between continuing training system, corporate personnel management policy and organizational development; more precisely the correlation between continuing training tracks leading to intermediate-level posts in industrial companies in France and Germany and, on the one hand, the personnel management policy based on such tracks and, on the other, corporate organizational development.[1]

The way in which access to intermediate-level posts is organized in France and Germany and the corresponding training tracks are representative of two very different vocational training models and can thus provide some rather general insights:

- *France* represents the state-regulated, school-based initial training model associated with large-scale unregulated ("ad hoc") continuing training, particularly at the beginning of working life – of course supplemented by learning at the workplace. This model is referred to as the *"modèle scolaire"*, i.e. the school-based model, though one really ought to add the *"modèle de formation sur le tas"*, i.e. the on-the-job training model.

1 This paper is based on a study carried out by the author on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Education and Science and in cooperation with several research institutes in France on new intermediate-level education and career tracks in Germany and France. See Drexel, I.: Das Ende des Facharbeiteraufstiegs? Neue mittlere Bildungs- und Karrierewege in Deutschland und Frankreich – ein Vergleich, Frankfurt/New York 1993; the findings of this study have been supplemented here with experience gained from ongoing projects.

- *Germany*, by contrast, represents the model of the publicly-regulated dual-type of initial vocational training combined with a few regulated continuing training tracks mainly leading to intermediate-level posts (e.g. technician, master craftsman); this combination of training forms is likewise supplemented on a large scale by unregulated, ad hoc continuing training and learning at the workplace. Learning at the workplace here, however, has to some extent a different, rather special status, namely where it is a prerequisite for access to regulated continuing training tracks.[2] Moreover, it is of a different quality insofar as it builds up on the dual initial training which itself combines formalized and informal learning. The French refer to this type of training as the *"modèle professionnel"*, the career model.

The modalities of accessing intermediate-level posts – the cases of master craftsman and technician being taken here as examples – highlight, as in a prism, the differences between the two training systems and their implications for corporate work organization. I will outline that in the following, of course only broadly, before summarizing with a number of conclusions. For methodological and didactic reasons, I will address first the German and then the French situation.

Training tracks, corporate personnel management policy and organizational development in the Federal Republic of Germany

The way that continuing training tracks, corporate personnel management policy and organizational development have developed in the Federal Republic of Germany presents a picture with some contradictions:

(1) The section of the *continuing training system* of interest here has been traditionally characterized by publicly regulated and financially supported training tracks catering for skilled workers; these opportunities have been constantly improved over the past few years. Because of all these characteristic features, these training tracks have been highly attractive to skilled workers. They also have had a good reputation among employers for supporting, on a relatively large scale, promotion schemes for their manually skilled workforce. No new initial training tracks leading to intermediate-level qualifications offering direct access to techni-

2 Two or three years of occupational experience are required as an eligibility condition for commencing training for the technician or master craftsman qualifications.

cian posts were created; corresponding ideas discussed during the 1960s were quickly dropped in deference to the importance of shop-floor experience for such posts. A remarkable situation: despite far-reaching changes in the other segments of the German education and training system, access to intermediate-level posts on the basis of publicly regulated continuing training and internal promotion has long remained relatively unchanged. This situation has also raised the attractiveness of the training-and-practice route to skilled worker qualifications and thus of the dual system.

For *organizational development*, the resulting ample supply of skilled workers *and* master craftsmen and technicians who had passed through skilled worker positions signified the chance of (and sometimes even an obligation to) opting for a relatively low degree of taylorization. The significance here of the availability of skilled manpower has been described by many authors in the past. But persons with intermediate-level skills who had risen from the skilled worker ranks were also of great significance in this respect: this can be readily seen from the French example and will be pointed out below.

(2) First, however, this quite positive picture of a mutual strengthening between regulated continuing training tracks, stable promotion paths and a relatively low degree of taylorization needs to be reviewed and analysed in the light of modern-day needs.

It is true that the attractiveness of intermediate-level continuing training tracks and the strength of the initial training tracks which precede them (dual system) have led to a massive increase in the number of persons undergoing this type of continuing training over the past 10 to 15 years: the number of persons qualifying for the master craftsman qualification increased from 6,200 in 1980 to 15,000 in 1992.[3] The result of this expansion has been a surplus of master craftsmen and technicians, i.e. increasing percentages of skilled workers holding an intermediate-level qualification. But taking this figure as a whole understates the problem insofar as the surplus tends to be concentrated in certain companies and divisions.

On the other hand, the functions traditionally associated with technicians and master craftsmen are increasingly being allocated to other manpower groups in the wake of new rationalization concepts: to highly skilled workers on the one hand (e.g. in connection with groupwork schemes, production islands, etc.), and to young graduates from higher education institutes of advanced technology on

3 Calculating the corresponding figures for persons qualifying as technicians is problematic.

the other, who are increasingly occupying posts which would previously have been held by technicians and, in some companies, are also taking on the functions of master craftsmen. Although from the statistical viewpoint the number of higher education engineering graduates occupying technician and master craftsman positions is still somewhat marginal at the moment, the *potential* for a displacement effect is very strong given the increasing number of persons graduating from higher education institutes of advanced technology. And the problems of statistical documentation and uneven distribution referred to above likewise arise here. My experience from company case studies conducted over the past few years, though of course without claim to being representative, shows that the process of engineer substitution, which is primarily affecting technicians at the moment, has speeded up recently in many companies and will continue to gather speed in future.

If one observes these different developments in conjunction, there is evidence of a *pincer phenomenon involving multiple and ever fiercer competition* for intermediate-level positions, positions which in any case have been and are continuing to be consistently slashed as modern lean production strategies are applied: competition from newly qualified master craftsmen and technicians, from skilled workers and from higher education engineering graduates.

The immediate implications of this pincer constellation for *organizational development* cannot yet be conclusively assessed as the problem is relatively recent and to some extent overlaps with others. It is clear, however, that the surplus of highly skilled workers, master craftsmen, technicians and engineering graduates on certain labour market segments is at this stage facilitating the application of strategies to flatten hierarchical qualification structures. It can be assumed that some of the highly prized schemes introduced to broaden the occupational profile of skilled workers have benefited both from the hidden skill potential among skilled workers holding a master craftsman or technician qualification and from their interest in demonstrating their abilities.

In the medium term, however, this pincer constellation will lead to a pronounced decline in the attractiveness of training for intermediate-level qualifications – and consequently also in the number of young people entering the corresponding positions. The master craftsman and the technician, exposed to the two-pronged pressure of lean manufacturing concepts *and* an expanding supply of skills, could tomorrow and thereafter become marginal figures, perhaps even disappear altogether. The outcome remains unpredictable.

What would be the implications for organizational development of the prospect, regarded as salutary by some experts, of a total absence of master craftsmen and technicians? The findings of the study on France can supply a number of answers.

Training tracks, corporate personnel management policy and organizational development in France

(1) The French *education and training system* is quite different from the German with regard to access to intermediate-level posts. France still has its traditional path leading skilled workers to master craftsman and technician posts, but this path relies on corporate nomination and appointment rather than on publicly regulated continuing training qualifications enjoying nationwide recognition. Alongside this corporate promotion track, various *new, school-based initial training tracks for young people* have emerged over the past 30 years which allow for direct horizontal or lateral access to intermediate-level posts for young people starting out on a career:

- two tracks leading to the baccalauréat qualification with a strong technical component, the "bac technologique" and the "bac professionnel";
- two tracks starting at the baccalauréat level and involving stringent selection procedures which lead, after a two-year college-based course, to various higher-level technical qualifications (e.g. BTS, DUT).

(2) Corporate reactions to holders of the baccalauréat technologique[4] have differed from their reactions to holders of the higher technical qualifications:

The number of young people with the baccalauréat technologique qualification has increased rapidly. Companies have recruited them on a not insubstantial scale, but in view of the previously announced demand for technicians it is surprising that most of the new appointments have been only to skilled worker posts. Usually, however, these young workers are sooner or later promoted to technical or other white-collar positions.

4 The analysis here is restricted to holders of the baccalauréat technologique as no conclusive assessment can yet be made of the trajectories of holders of the baccalauréat professionnel, a qualification which was only introduced in the mid-1980s.

A much more rewarding path is that of the *higher-level technical qualifications, the BTS or the DUT*. Holders of these qualifications usually commence their working life in technical posts.

The impact on *personnel management policy* of the rapidly expanding supply of young people with better educational qualifications can only be discussed here in brief. Promotion from skilled worker posts to intermediate-level posts, traditionally characteristic of French companies, has long retained a surprising degree of importance. Nonetheless, technical staff with higher education qualifications have been surging ahead since the mid-1980s, including in the statistics, and are now displacing persons on the promotion track. Such processes were particularly evident in our case studies in large and medium-size companies.

The implications for the skilled workforce are self-evident. Those for the education system – profound destabilization because of an ever stronger student propensity to remain in school-based education and training tracks and constant pressure on the state to set up more higher-level education tracks – cannot be discussed here.[5]

We can, however, discuss *certain implications for corporate organizational development*: firstly the impact of the new qualifications on the traditionally relatively highly taylorized structures to be found in French companies. Here, the findings of our (and others') investigations are ambiguous, even contradictory: on the one hand, true to the taylorist logic, particularly interesting and prestigious functions have been taken away from skilled workers and promotees and reallocated to persons with a higher education qualification; on the other, however, there is also evidence of certain functions common to all these persons' job profiles being upgraded as a result of pressure exerted by higher education graduates for better working conditions.[6]

A second question is the impact of the new qualifications on actual corporate work processes and the associated communication and cooperation processes.

One impact is the phenomenon, much lamented in France, of a *lack of any common language* within the company workforce. The communication problems thus referred to between blue-collar workers, intermediate-level technical staff

5 For a detailed discussion, see Drexel 1993, op. cit.

6 It is unfortunately not possible to discuss the particularly interesting issue of the impact of higher education qualifications on master craftsman positions because of the profile of the investigations (focus on engineering and specialist positions).

and higher-level engineers arise because these groups have no shared educational or career background and therefore only a limited amount of shared experience. The social distance between these groups resulting from their different educational and career backgrounds has implications for the work process: they cannot "get along" with each other, neither workwise nor socially. In problematic situations, they have no shared experience to suggest an appropriate reaction. The result is friction in their cooperation.

A second, closely associated but distinct impact is that *individual groups within the workforce adopt a siege mentality vis-à-vis the others* as a result of the fiercer competition for the few intermediate-level posts available. The exchange of information is functionalized in the interest of safeguarding one's own promotion prospects by acquiring a competitive information edge or information monopoly. Evidently it is not only the shop-floor and technical personnel's ability to communicate and cooperate which has been impeded by the influx of a more highly qualified group with a college history of socialization but also their readiness to do so and their interest in doing so.

There is also a third phenomenon, referred to as the *loss of corporate memory*. This is an allusion not only to the departure of older workers but also and more specifically to the marginalization and resulting "self-exile" of persons with experience gained at a variety of corporate workplaces, experience which despite – or perhaps because of – all modernization schemes has remained relevant. Because of the gloomy promotion prospects, there are ever fewer people with a broad understanding and experience whom a personally satisfying career trajectory would motivate to contribute their knowledge and abilities to the company.

The *consequences of such communication problems, blockades and discontinuities* are self-evident: considerable frustration on the part of the workers concerned, tensions within the workforce, amd major quality and efficiency problems for the employers.

These correlations have of course not gone unnoticed, nor have they failed to provoke reactions: some companies opted from the outset for a kind of two-pronged strategy to test the possibilities and risks of their new recruitment policies by also maintaining the traditional promotion track so that they could revitalize it if required. Others have corrected former policy options, imposing a ban or a quota arrangement on recruiting holders of higher level technical qualifications and – interestingly in this context – revitalizing old and introducing new forms of

promotion from the shop floor based on specific continuing training schemes, often in modular format.[7]

For France, too, therefore, *the future is uncertain*. It will depend on the extent to which such alternative policies and policy corrections are implemented and, more importantly, whether it is not already too late, whether the potential and attractiveness of the promotion track has not already been too deeply undermined to be effectively revitalized.

In the final analysis, both countries, despite their very different backgrounds, are facing quite similar dangers: they are risking, firstly, losing the bridging skills which, especially in a lean, decentralized organization, are needed to safeguard the vital coherence between the various corporate sub-processes.[8] And they are risking, secondly, losing the training potentials of learning during and through promotion, learning in a "targetted career process", a specific sequence of workplaces in which each workplace builds up on the skills gained at its predecessor – they are thus risking also losing communication and cooperation bridges in the vertical and horizontal perspective.

Some conclusions

What can one learn from these experiences and from comparing and contrasting them? I will discuss five conclusions.

1. The organizational development issue must not be narrowed down to an analysis of that which bears that label. Organizational development in the sense of a systematic development of corporate divisional and workplace structures also takes place where no self-contained unit with a corresponding title exists to carry out that function. The systematic development of organizations (and manpower) can take place even where it is not explicit, i.e. in the form of *implicit organization (and manpower) development*. And in many German companies such development seemingly does take place implicitly: invisibly guided by an occupation-pro-

7 The deployment of holders of the baccalauréat technologique to the shop floor and their subsequent promotion to white-collar technical positions can also be seen as an attempt to reproduce promotion tracks on a sounder qualifications basis.

8 See Drexel, I.: Brückenqualifikationen zwischen Facharbeiter und Ingenieur – eine Revitalisierung von Facharbeiteraufstieg. In: BWP No. 4, 1994.

filed sectioning of the supply of skilled manpower which predominates on the German labour market *and* the closely interlinked supply of persons with intermediate-level skills drawn from the shop floor.

2. That which is perceived in some of today's personnel management and training concepts as a desirable increase in flexibility and is pursued by substituting traditional manpower groups by others with a different social and training background (by breaking down traditional education and "career" patterns and also traditional division of labour and cooperation arrangements), can, in contrast to the promises of flexibility theories, lead to a *new and forceful rigidification of manpower deployment and to major losses in efficiency*.

The question of organizational development therefore also has to take account of the development of functional mechanisms and processes between the various elements of the organization – in particular the *communication and cooperation processes* taking place between divisions and individual groups within the workforce. Vocational training policy and vocational training research likewise have to take this factor into account.

3. It is not only, as has long been recognized, the structure of initial vocational training but also – and this has long remained unrecognized – the structure of continuing training which has a major impact on organizational development. The correlation outlined here between publicly regulated continuing training tracks (which, by being thus regulated, are more or less competitive with school-based initial training) on the one hand and communication and cooperation between the shop floor and the technical offices on the other is only a segment of the overall picture, though admittedly an important segment. To put not too fine a point on it: the structure of the continuing training system, together with the initial training system, lays the foundations for *either walls or bridges in the workforce and corporate work processes*.

4. Bridges for communication and cooperation and the qualification groups which build them, master craftsmen and technicians for example, are not becoming any less important as a result of the *restructuring processes* aimed at flattening hierarchies; on the contrary, they are becoming *more important*: the extraordinary increase in work intensity in conjunction with the need to assure quality and avoid downtimes calls not for less but for more friction-free communication, for anticipation of potential faults at an early stage in the production process and of their possible consequences at the later stages. This trend in organizational devel-

opment calls first and foremost for the ability to *communicate on the basis of experience* and to devise and discuss problem-solving mechanisms which take due account of the interests of all areas and groups involved.

All this applies even more to the second element of the lean manufacturing concept, the decentralization of corporate functions and outsourcing. Experience would suggest that communication via technological media will fail if it is not backed up by concrete ideas about the "fractalized" areas, the way they operate and how their interests fit in with those of other areas.

5. *Bridging skills* are therefore more necessary today than ever before, and not only from the vertical but also from the horizontal viewpoint. My final thesis is that they cannot be developed exclusively by formalized, in the extreme case school-based training tracks nor exclusively by learning at the workplace. We need *new mixes* of these two forms of acquiring skills. We therefore also need new, coordinated concepts for training policy and personnel management policy involving *targetted learning during the course of the career*, or more specifically new mixes of formalized learning and learning in defined workplace sequences throughout the career.

Panel Discussion

Continuing Training in Times of Lean Production – What are the Limits to Learning Within the Work Process?

Panelists

Ingrid Drexel (Institute for Social Science Research, Munich); Georg Kintzele (EU Commission, Task Force), Brussels; Dieter Lellmann (Federal Ministry of Education and Science), Bonn; Oliver Lübke (German Trade Union Confederation - DGB), Düsseldorf; Erik Nexelmann (Ministry of Education), Copenhagen; Dr Artur Wollert (Hertie), Frankfurt

Moderator

Dr Edgar Sauter (Federal Institute for Vocational Training - BIBB), Berlin

Rapporteurs

Christel Alt, Dr Uwe Grünewald (Federal Institute for Vocational Training - BIBB), Berlin

The discussion centred on the following issues:

- the correlation between changing technological and organizational contexts and skill/competence requirements at intermediate level;
- the impact of corporate organizational development on forms of continuing training, particularly learning within the work process;
- the requirements to be met by initial and continuing vocational training in future.

Correlation between changing technological and organizational contexts and skill/competence requirements at intermediate level

The meeting first discussed the hypotheses outlined in the presentation by Dr Drexel concerning the correlation between initial vocational training, the structure of continuing training and corporate organizational and manpower development. It was emphasised that corporate development processes should not only be seen in the light of technological developments. They are also implicitly controlled by the skill potential of the workforce. In the industrial sector in Germany, this skill potential is largely defined by the skill profiles of skilled manual workers, master craftsmen and technicians. At intermediate level (master craftsman and techni-

cian), substitution in the sense of predatory competition was not regarded as being an automatic corollary even to lean management and lean production. On the contrary, the substitution processes which are eroding established vocational training and career patterns were seen to be an expression of the desired flexibility and changing requirements and competences. The aim of organizational development processes is, after all, to raise productivity and create new performance potential by restructuring work. Master craftsmen and technicians would continue to be required in German companies, albeit only to some extent for the reason advance by Dr Drexel – to maintain communication between the shop floor and the engineering offices. But the role of the master craftsman would indeed change, and this will call for the master craftsman's occupational skills to be supplemented in future by management skills. As a parallel development, companies will need to open up more career paths for skilled manual workers.

Discussants from the trade union side pointed out the different interests at stake in the field of continuing training and the associated differences in what was expected of such training. Alongside the employers' interest in continuing training for their workforces as a means of raising productivity, there is also the employees' interest in protecting and preserving their labour capability in order to safeguard their position and sustain their "marketability". The trade union interest in continuing training is therefore centred on ensuring that the skills acquired by all categories of the workforce are widely marketable both internally and externally and on the opening up of clearly outlined career opportunities to follow training for specialization or promotion.

Representatives of government clarified the point that recruitment and continuing training strategies at the intermediate level of corporate structures are only indirectly within the range of decisions taken by educational policymakers and the agencies which commission continuing training. Companies themselves should be at liberty to decide how much value to attach to investment in human resources. In Germany the context for their decisions in this respect is defined by the prevailing system of a dual-type initial vocational training followed up by regulated continuing training courses for career advancement.

Drawing on the experience gained in Denmark, employers called for better and broader skills at a higher level. Employers are generally attaching more importance to vocational training, especially to the "soft" qualifications, communication skills and flexibility. A well-functioning dialogue between the social partners and the government has made it easier in Denmark to have such skills developed within

the company sector. This has in turn meant that companies have been able to diversify their operations. It was pointed out that Danish companies, like German companies, have an expanding need at intermediate level for management functions of the supervisor type.

From Italy it was reported that intermediate-level positions are filled not only with regard to the skills required but also with regard to remuneration. For that reason tariff structures should give greater consideration to qualifications acquired through continuing training.

Employers hoped that the lessons to be learned from the developments in France described by Dr Drexel would be properly heeded. This meant retaining both the function of master craftsman and access to that function via promotion based on continuing training for persons with a skilled manual worker qualification. In contrast to what had previously been claimed, this is not only a question of corporate policy. The company does indeed have to take the decision, but in so doing it is cognizant of only some of the relevant parameters. The situation at present is an experimental one, and its future rests partly in the hands of education and training policy. Education and training policy must support corporate mobility and promotion efforts by arranging for suitable training courses. It is moreover doubtful whether the function of master craftsman is sustainable in isolation; worth considering is whether it would be better to support a broader approach to promotion from skilled manual worker level.

From the European angle it was pointed out that the German debate on the functions of master craftsman and technician has no counterpart at European level. This is a matter which has to be resolved at company level. Consideration should be given instead at European level and within each Member State to the idea of setting up a vocational training research programme to help support the qualifications essential for the survival of small and medium industry in Europe. The current debate on the correlation between organizational development, manpower development and continuing training should not neglect the "golden triangle" for the small and medium industry sector: new technologies, organizational development and manpower development. It would be helpful here to identify what key skills are needed for applying new technologies and how these can be defined and developed. To do this there is a need for new types of partnership between companies and education and training institutions, including the universities.

The impact of corporate organizational development on forms of continuing training, particularly learning within the work process

The meeting was unanimous in emphasising that a broad and quality initial training is the most important human-resource prerequisite for developing corporate organizational structures (including the implementation of "lean" concepts). Modern forms of work organization create a need for participation-oriented continuing training for the workforce – only thus is it possible to secure acceptance and motivation. The form of continuing training then has to depend on the content and objectives of the training. Learning within the work process can take the form of group work, quality circles, or various forms of in-company rotation. This learning at work must, however, be flanked by the systematic delegation of planning and decision-making responsibility to the workplace level and by a process organization which allows for and promotes communication across all interfaces. In small and medium companies, learning within the work process can be supported by competent skill counselling, course marketing geared to the needs of such companies and a well organized and well planned learning process.

Speakers from the education and training research community voiced doubts about the validity of the premise of an increase in learning at work. Empirical research would suggest that innovative forms of learning at the workplace account for less than 10% of in-company continuing training as a whole.

Employers pointed out that work organization is becoming more homogeneous throughout Europe, especially at management level. Despite the importance of participation, leadership is still wanted and there is indeed a demand for intermediate-level management personnel, though not necessarily across all the traditional functions. This "harmonization" of work organization across Europe also signifies a cross-industry challenge to continuing training, a challenge, however, which cannot be successfully handled by providing for more state regulation. Flexibility in continuing training and company responsibility for continuing training have to remain undiminished. Customized in-company continuing training, however, irrespective of its form and importance, is not alone enough to solve the problems associated with the correlation between skills and competitiveness: companies as such have to become "learning enterprises" if the competitiveness of the European economy is to be sustained. This would also suggest a higher priority for manpower development measures to accompany developments in organizational structures. The new skills would also have to be expressly called for by the workforce; the latter are today sufficiently "mature" for participatory structures.

The trade union side also agreed that corporate organizational development has an impact on continuing training. Continuing training thus indirectly becomes a "must" for the worker, though caution must be exercised to ensure that continuing training is not used as a repair mechanism to remedy a lack of or inadequate initial training. The need for lifelong learning in turn creates a need for more discussion within the European Union on employee rights with regard to continuing training. Issues such as access to continuing training, training leave and the funding of continuing training have not yet been satisfactorily settled either at EU level or at Member State level. The same applies to transparency in the field of qualifications. The power to take the initiative in these areas rests with those responsible for education and training policy. The state and the social partners must act on the basis of consensus to regulate systems and structures and support continuing training at work through collective and/or company agreements.

The requirements to be met by initial and continuing training in future

The requirements to be met by initial and continuing training in Europe in the future were unanimously identified as more flexibility and mobility. A precondition for this, however, is a sound initial training followed by possibilities of further self-advancement based on continuing training, higher education and work experience.

Speakers from Denmark stated that individuals, companies and societies have no alternative to developing more systematically their human resources. Failure to do so would entail failure in the face of international competition. Individuals would have to change as much as companies to accommodate the new requirements of working life. The funding of initial and continuing training would therefore have to be taken care of jointly by the state, the social partners and individuals.

Speakers from Germany pointed out that learning within the work process is becoming increasingly difficult. The lengthy induction and development processes customary in the past are virtually impossible today because of ever shorter innovation cycles and, by extension, a lack of continuity in building up skills, because technologies have foregone all transparency, and because work processes are becoming increasingly complex. The demand for ever greater flexibility was also seen in a critical light. The result can be to overstrain the workforce (cf. the rising risk of heart attack among master craftsmen and skilled manual workers). Compa-

nies therefore need workers who are to some extent able to self-regulate their reactions to changing requirements, for example through group work. Full use should be made of the advantages of modern technologies for the purposes of promoting learning at work. Modern communication possibilities could also help promote a networked approach to in-company training. Such an approach might also offer a way of improving continuing training in small and medium enterprises.

Workshop C 3

Vocational Training Systems and Global Competition: The Acid Test for National Training Models

Introduction Paper

Dr Richard Koch (BIBB), Berlin

To an ever increasing degree, the essential geographic lines of economic competition are not being drawn between European countries, but rather on a broader international level. Given that the European economy currently faces the spectre of (further) market-share losses in a number of key industries in its global competition with Southeast Asia and North America, attention is being directed more and more towards the competitiveness of the European economy as a whole. This situation contributes to the strengthening of economic interlinkages within the EU and to the deepening of the European process of integration because the Member States recognize that in many cases they are no longer able to solve the associated economic and social problems alone.

In addition to product innovation, increasingly important conditions for the enhancement of economic competitiveness are flexible methods of production, high quality levels for products and services, and customer-oriented sales practices. It is becoming ever more evident that traditional, largely Tayloristic labour organization structures are not suitable for fulfilling those requirements. Lean production concepts, which are currently being put to the test across the globe, are based on elements such as comprehensive labour forms, flatter hierarchies and greater emphasis on group work. Staff members are being called upon to demonstrate more individual initiative in the planning, implementation and quality control of their work.

A workforce's skill pool and motivational potential, factors which are largely shaped by the education and vocational training system, can be seen as crucial for

ensuring an economy's competitiveness. However, as the example of German machine tool manufacturing demonstrates, a high level of vocational training alone cannot secure market shares in global competition. Nevertheless, it is important to test and analyze the national training models.

The German dual training system is characterized by the fact that it does a good job in providing technical training at the specialist skill level requisite for German economic competitiveness and that it generates a vigorous will to perform and achieve among the workforce. It is not unfounded to maintain that the dual system is therefore an important competitive advantage. In addition, the German occupation-based approach to organizing labour and vocational training has managed to limit the Taylorization of labour in many branches.

- Is the German occupations concept and the vocational training system based on that concept coming under fire as a result of the newly emerging methods of production? Or do occupation-based vocational training systems provide especially favourable conditions for forward-looking training for the workforce?
- What kind of developmental alternatives are presenting themselves for those vocational training systems that emphasize school instruction (e.g. France) or those based on horizontally and vertically balanced modular concepts (e.g. United Kingdom)?

Modern production and organizational concepts are fuelling a trend towards global homogenization of job structures and training requirements. But at the same time the skill pools of national workforces continue to be structured differently, not least owing to different national systems of initial and continuing training. From a training policy perspective, this diversity of vocational training systems is generally viewed as advantageous.

- Will the demands of global competition put pressure on the various national training systems to adapt in such a way that the final result might be a trend towards structural convergence?

The vocational training systems of the Member States have been developed through long historical processes and are rooted in national sociocultural, economic and political contexts. It is therefore unlikely that the future will bring a situation whereby certain national systems considered to be successful are simply adopted by other Member States. However, it could well make sense to strive for

gradual convergence of the national vocational training systems' capacities in the light of the comparable challenges wich they face in terms of socio-economic structural change.

- What exactly are those comparable challenges?
- Given the existing situation regarding international competition, which requirements must a national training system be able to fulfil?
- What is the proper balance between the economy-related functions of a vocational training system (training, labour market) and the society-related functions (education, social integration)?
- Are there elements in the various national systems that have proven their worth and, if appropriately adapted, could contribute to further developing vocational training in other Member States?

Presentations

A Comparative Review: Germany, the UK, the USA and Japan

David Soskice (Science Centre, Berlin/Oxford University)

The point I want to argue is that different countries have different institutional capacities for developing training systems and that their capacity in this respect in turn determines the way in which they compete in international markets. I'm going to take rather literally the title assigned to me, which emphasizes international competitiveness and its links with training, by suggesting at the outset that if one looks at most advanced economies today one finds that there are two very broad and very different models of the way in which education and training work. The first model is what one might call the Anglo-Saxon model, and here we can take the United States and the United Kingdom as examples – though one must beware of looking just at their training systems as that would be very misleading. In the United States and the United Kingdom, the majority of young people who stay in serious education and training after compulsory secondary education – that is to say after the age of 16 or 18 – opt for a general type of education. This model, with only slight variations, is also to be found in all the English-speaking countries, not only in the UK and the US but also in Canada, Australia, New Zea-

land, and Ireland. Here again, the great majority of young people in post-compulsory education and training are to be found in general education, and indeed all these countries have found it extremely difficult to develop effective systems of vocational training for young people after the age of 16 or 18. Almost without exception these countries have looked to Germany or Japan and, acknowledging that Germany and Japan have marvellous systems for training young people in serious things like industry and so on, during the 1980s they tried to develop ways of being equally effective. But almost without exception these countries have failed, and it is my strong belief that the United States is in the course of failing with its experiment at the moment.

By very strong contrast, there's a second model which we can call the northern European or Japanese model, though the model obviously works rather differently in northern Europe and Japan. It can be found in most of the northern European countries – the Netherlands, Scandinavia, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, and so on – but also in Japan and indeed in South Korea. In these countries a very large proportion of young people completing compulsory secondary education go into serious training closely related to the company sector though often with strong public-sector support. In Japan and South Korea the training takes the form of full-time in-company training with only very limited input from the public sector or industry associations. In the northern European countries the training ranges from the Germanic apprenticeship system to the more public-sector-oriented approach in Scandinavia, but in all cases the training undergone by this large proportion of young people is relatively well defined and focuses on developing skills which will be needed in a usually quite narrowly defined field.

So, broadly speaking, there are two very different systems in operation in the advanced economies today. There are, of course, very great differences within each of these models – certainly between the variants found in Japan and Germany but also between those found in the UK and the US. The most striking difference between the UK and the US here is that whereas very large numbers of Americans – that is to say 60% or so – are educated up to some sort of higher education level, unfortunately only a rather small proportion of young people in the UK proceed to higher education – though their number has greatly increased in the last few years. Why are there such big differences here and what are the implications of these differences for international competitiveness – is there a correlation between a country's international competitiveness and the types of goods it produces on the one hand and that country's model of education and training

on the other? Secondly, to what extent can one engage in what is sometimes called "transplant surgery", that is to say the well-known pursuit of taking individual features of the German model and trying to "transplant" them into the training systems of other countries?

Let us first look at the northern European-Japanese-type model to see how it works; that will help us answer both these questions. The northern European and Japanese system works because it provides incentives for young people at the age of 16 or 18 to make very substantial investments in training in order to acquire skills which will be relevant to a relatively narrow field of future occupational activity. The critical factor on which the German system, the Japanese system, and the northern European systems depend is that they can persuade a lot or a very significant proportion of young people to make really important investment decisions at this juncture in their career. Under what circumstances can able students be induced to make such an investment? The research which we have done shows very clearly that the reason why young people are prepared to make those investments – and in particular why many very able young people are prepared not only to invest in training but also to engage in some kind of higher education at the same time – is that there are enough companies in northern Europe, Japan and South Korea which are prepared to offer high-quality, reasonably secure employment to able people who are prepared to make those investments. This in turn raises the question why it is that companies in these countries are prepared to make such offers, to create these incentives for young people. The answer has very much to do with the type of goods which these companies produce and the type of qualifications, the type of skills, the type of young people they need to produce them. By and large, companies in northern Europe are producing high-quality, relatively sophisticated goods, often with a high degree of customization and intended for niche markets – in other words types of production requiring a non-managerial workforce which has a sound understanding of technology and good technology qualifications, which is prepared to stay with the company and acquire company-specific organizational skills, which is prepared to work cooperatively and, in many cases, to shoulder a quite considerable amount of autonomous responsibility. The situation is somewhat different in Japan. The types of goods produced in Japan tend to focus more on so-called mass-customization, the commercialization of new technologies and so on, and Japanese production requires workers who will stay even longer with the company and have a greater focus on company organizational skills and technology skills. But in all these cases there is a

clear link between the companies' product market strategies in world markets and the type of workforce they need to be successful.

Now, one might ask whether it would be possible to persuade companies in the UK or the US to adopt the same type of product market strategies. The answer, of course, is that some companies in the UK and the US already have, but that most companies could not because they lack an environment which provides the type of "public goods" which they need to do so. From the work we have been doing it seems that three essential institutions are needed for the types of production typical of Germany and Japan. Firstly, long-term financial institutions – companies need to be in an environment in which they can rely on long-term links with banks in order to be able to make the necessary long-term research decisions and research development investments. This has implications for the type of skills they need. Secondly, there is a need for a cooperative and integrated system of industrial relations. Companies need to be able to rely in the German case on industry unions and works councils, in the Japanese case on company unions. They need cooperative unions which can ensure that the very well trained workers on whom the company depends will behave in a cooperative way. And they need a union system which can give a guarantee to young people that the way the training system works is going to be in their favour. Thirdly, companies need to rely on a system of close cooperation and coordination with other companies in order to have the type of technology diffusion necessary for their high-quality production strategies. These systems, therefore, rely on institutions – long-term finance, cooperative industrial relations, and close cooperation between companies – which in Anglo-Saxon countries simply do not exist.

To turn to the Anglo-Saxon economies, we in the UK of course think it's a great pity that UK companies don't have access to long-term finance, don't have a system of integrated, cooperative trade unionism, don't have a system of close coordination between companies – and if that's true of the UK it's even more true of the US. But looking at things another way – and now I'll focus on the US rather than the UK because I think the UK has a lot of problems – the American system has a great many advantages. If one thinks of the things which the American system has been extraordinarily successful at doing in terms of the production of goods and services, one has to acknowledge, firstly, that the US is a leading country as far as labour productivity is concerned. Its labour productivity is superior to Germany's. Secondly, it is a fact that almost all radical innovations, almost all the major technological changes which we've seen over the past 20 years originated

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in the US: the huge surge of activity witnessed in the newly-emergent high-technology science-based sectors – semiconductors, biotechnology, biogenetics and so on – came originally from the US. Secondly, therefore, we have to acknowledge that the American system of education and training in the broadest sense of the term – and this is why I wanted to move away from focusing on training as such – has perhaps played a key role in defining the course taken by the advanced economies over the past 20 years. Thirdly, if we look at a range of other sectors, high-technology sectors such as telecommunications which, although perhaps past the white heat of technological change, are still developing fast and handle competition by standard-setting – developing effective standards and then selling those standards and the corresponding goods and services – there can be no doubt at all that the Americans are vastly better at doing this than either the Germans or the Japanese – the Japanese are very weak on developing telecommunications. Another closely-related industry is aircraft manufacturing, again an industry in which the Japanese are very weak.

More generally, it is interesting to look at the way in which innovation takes place in the United States – many people are uneasy about it because it has a slightly tacky smack but there can be no doubt about its importance. The Ameri-

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cans are brilliant at working out, thinking up new products which meet particular needs – not necessarily high-tech products, though of course nowadays microprocessors are often part of them: from skateboards to all sorts of little electronic devices for all sorts of household uses. Producing these products may not require anything very sophisticated, it may just involve putting together parts manufactured in a fairly standardized way. But these products depend on very effective marketing, very effective advertising and very effective selling and they require an ability on the part of the manufacturing company to reposition itself very rapidly on changing product markets.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, the US has a huge and burgeoning service sector where organizational structures have been changing very, very rapidly over the past decade. As a result of the microprocessor, the personal computer, interpersonal skills have become vastly more important in travel agencies, in the retail sector, the financial sector, the insurance sector and so on. Interpersonal skills, along with social skills, self-organization skills and computing skills, are things which the Americans, with their higher education and the way their higher education sector works, have been extraordinarily good at producing. The emphasis in the American higher education system on these skills rather than on lofty academic values – a visit to any community college in the US soon reveals that academic values are not what the American higher education system is about – enables people to communicate with each other and acquire the social and organizational skills which they need to succeed in the American system. Analysing the key elements in the American education and training system, therefore, we have firstly this enormous fact that 60% of the population undergo some form of higher education and emerge therefrom with these social skills. You may argue that they don't come out with the intellectual depth and polish to which the UK higher education system aspires but that's not the point here. Secondly, the high-end of the US university system, because it has had a great deal of money pumped into it, has been extraordinarily successful in producing America's science-based innovation system. This has been associated not with long-term, permanent jobs in big companies but almost exactly the opposite: very rapid mobility from start-up companies back to university, out into bigger NASDAQ-calibre companies and so on – in other words a highly mobile market of scientists and research engineers.

Looking at the situation outside the public-sector education and training system, companies in the US do not spend money on or invest in initial training – that would be very risky because people would be poached away as soon as they

had been trained – but they do spend a lot of money on sending people off on short courses to learn all sorts of skills. The statistics show that American companies spend enormous amounts of money on training of this type.

Thus if I can recapitulate, we shouldn't think in terms of there being one best system of training or education and training. We should see that different countries have different capacities for the types of education and training systems they can develop. These education and training systems in turn determine the type of goods and services with which those countries will be able to be internationally competitive.

I would like to conclude with a brief comment on the United Kingdom. To my mind the most important lesson which the UK could learn from this sort of comparative analysis is: don't look at the German system. Notwithstanding a need for certain reforms, the German system is admittedly extraordinarily successful. But the UK doesn't have the underlying institutional capacity to set up the German system in the UK. Look instead at the American system, look to spending vastly more money on British universities. Just at a time when lots of young people are wanting to go to universities, the British government has sharply cut back the amount of money available to them in the form of maintenance grants; it has cut back their practical ability to go to university. Look instead at the United States and be prepared to spend money on universities rather than training systems.

Professor Dr Felix Rauner (University of Bremen)

First of all I would like to comment that the topic we are discussing today is not one commonly found on any agenda. Attempting to associate education with a topic as profane as competitiveness would cause the hair on every German education scientist's head to stand on end. Even "Education 2000", the report of the Committee of Enquiry of the Bundestag, is absolutely silent on links between vocational education and training and competitiveness. By contrast, many studies have been drawn up in recent years in the USA which analyse and assess the US education system from the viewpoint of the competitiveness of the US economy. But there is a further reason why this topic should now be discussed in Germany.

Professor Dr Felix Rauner
University of Bremen

A stream of colleagues from other EU Member States are now saying: "The recession in Germany has finally proved that Germany's dual system of vocational training is clearly not the key to Germany's economic strength." It seems that Germany's neighbouring countries and Brussels had the impression that the Germans did not need to discuss their vocational training system because, without further justification, it could be assumed that the dual system of vocational training was the decisive factor explaining Germany's strong economic performance.

I would like to pick up some of the theses outlined by David Soskice. First, I agree with the general idea that occupations and vocational training traditions are very much more an expression of different industrial cultures than has generally been assumed in the past. Occupations and vocational training traditions do not derive directly from the skill requirements generated by industrial and technological change. Although this deterministic interpretation of the qualification process is widely criticised today, it still exerts a strong influence on the reasoning and actions of a very large number of those who are engaged in the field of vocational training. I would like to put forward an initial hypothesis on the topic of this workshop: addressing ourselves to the various aspects of global and international competition will not give us an answer to the question how we can further improve

our vocational training system in the absence of a European vocational training policy.

Let me illustrate this with some examples taken from our international comparative studies. One very clear example can be found in the machine tool industry. Although this is not a particularly major industry in the sense of dominating the economy , the MIT study entitled "Made in America" rightly pointed out that any economy which can no longer manufacture the machine tools it requires is jeopardizing its industrial competitiveness. The machine tool manufacturing industry is and will remain an important indicator of an industrial society's competitiveness.

David Soskice pointed out that the Americans held a predominant position in innovating in the machine tools sector until about 1978. I would agree with that: all fundamental innovations prior to that date ultimately originated in the USA. It was America which developed NC technology in the late 1950s and introduced that technology into machine tool manufacturing, the USA has had a tremendous amount of influence in the laying down of industrial standards, and the USA has been and continues to be the world leader in the field of microelectronics and was the undisputed world champion in the machine tool industry until the end of the 1970s. But then, despite this favourable background, America's machine tool industry collapsed within a very short period of time. It declined so rapidly that it is now of virtually no significance to international competition. Japanese manufacturers are now the predominant vendors of machine tools even on the US domestic market, and the German machine tool industry, despite having to import all major innovations in NC and CNC technology from the USA through licensing arrangements, has been able to expand its exports to the USA considerably. The question has to be "Why?" It is true that engineers are trained to a very respectable standard in the USA. But if one examines in detail the reasons why such a robust industry could collapse and other countries which had imported innovations in this field from the USA were suddenly able to overtake the US machine tool industry on the world market and even on the US market, one arrives at some interesting findings. I will examine two such findings because of their relevance to the topic of this workshop.

The standard to which engineers are trained in science and technology is not the only criterion determining that design engineers will produce competitive products. "Overengineering" is a term with which even we here in Germany are today familiar. A product is regarded as overengineered when engineers complain that their clients are too stupid to understand and use that product's intelligence.

One could describe American engineers' applications horizons as reaching as far as the moon but not as far as the company across the street. The designers of machine tools who have been generating the innovations have largely overlooked the small and medium companies which, as here in Germany, represent the economic backbone of the US manufacturing industry. Up-to-dateness, measured here by investment in NC or CNC machine tools, is a parameter which only just over 10% of US companies can meet: only one in ten machine tools in use is a modern machine tool, 90% are based on conventional technology. The up-to-dateness rating in Germany is not much better. If one compares these ratings with that of Japan, which lies between 50% and 70% depending on the industry concerned, one gets a clear idea of the considerable scale of the backlog already accumulated in terms of modernization. When, during our analyses, we asked manufacturing companies in the USA what significance they perceived in upgrading from NC to CNC technology when it was possible to convert from punched-tape-controlled to computer-controlled machine tools, all the design engineers reported that this had been no problem at all. More detailed questioning then revealed that they had incorporated the NC machinery, which fits perfectly into tayloristic manufacturing concepts, into the design of the CNC technology instead of using the introduction of CNC technology as an occasion for decentralising responsibility back to the shop floor level as other countries had done. American designers and engineers told us time and again that they were making tools for management and that the workforce was not capable of programming and operating these machines without assistance from better qualified personnel. The consequence, however, was that small companies had to import their machine tools – to the extent that they invested in them at all – from Japan or Germany because, since the introduction of CNC technology, the machine tools from these countries had been geared to being operated by skilled manual workers.

The second example concerns the motor vehicle sector. We recently conducted a study on the motor vehicle sector ~~based on~~ the questions "How are motor vehicle repair shops organized in Europe, Japan and the USA?" and "How are the staff trained?". We expected that since the USA does not have a regulated vocational training system, motor vehicle repair shops in the USA could not be optimally organized. We were in for quite a surprise. Repair shop productivity in the USA is considerably higher than in Germany, with approx. 120 vehicles per employee in the USA but under 100 in Germany. Our case studies revealed why this is the case. The skill levels and willingness-to-work levels are very high among employees in

motor vehicle repair shops in the USA. Customer satisfaction has much greater priority there than in comparable repair shops in Germany. This ultimately determines the companies' competitiveness and business results.

I can therefore endorse the second part of the hypothesis set out in the background documents for this workshop: competence, willingness to work and the organization of human resources are decisive factors for competitiveness and business success. However, that knowledge alone does not enlighten us on how we can generate such competence and willingness to work, nor on the skill mix required to produce such competence. It is not a country's vocational training system which determines a country's competitiveness. So the important issue is whether we can find sound reasons for establishing a link between developing competence and willingness to work on the one hand and the vocational training system on the other. Are occupational competence and willingness to work dependent on a labour market structure based on regulated occupations or should we in Europe generate occupational competence and willingness to work along the lines of the Japanese or American model? That this question is not absurd has been shown by the way the debate on lean production has been taken up. Lean production evidently also functions without skilled workers who have been trained for a recognized occupation. This gives us every reason to reflect on the vocational training systems in Europe. But we must also widen the horizons of the debate. The problem cannot be adequately tackled if the horizons are scaled back to education theory or to economic competitiveness alone.

I would like to add two comments which might take the discussion further. A relatively decisive role, to my mind, is played by the correlation between formalized work structures – which are often backed up by industrial relations and labour law – on the one hand and the vocational training system on the other. The USA distinguishes between over 16,000 formalized occupations, all of which are documented in the Directory of Occupational Titles (DOT). The DOT is to be found not only in the filing cabinets of the Department of Labor but also on every table around which wage negotiations are being conducted. And a point which is particularly astonishing is that the trade unions attach utmost importance to making sure that these 16,000 formalized occupations with their extremely pronounced vertical and horizontal demarcations are not changed in any way by the wage agreement. The DOT and the tradition of highly fragmented work which it reflects together probably represent one of the most powerful de-skilling instruments imaginable. It is also interesting to note that this system was largely imitated in the

USSR in the 1930s and subsquently also in China. Most of you probably already know that Lenin discussed the underlying concept with Taylor with growing enthusiasm. Even in today's Russia, the employment system recognizes 7,000 different occupations; the much smaller number of "school occupations" catered for by the education system are relatively isolated from the employment system. Labour law in China also recognizes a similar number of occupations, and here they play a very important role in the structuring of work. The "school occupations" are again very different from our concept of school-based vocational qualifications. A new recruit to a company workforce who has undergone a school-based vocational training is first of all classified in this correspondingly disparaging nomenclature. Of course, a high school student in the USA has to consider what he should learn if he aims to work in an occupation listed in the DOT. The relationship between the two systems – the vocational training system and the employment system – and the link between them, the transition from school to working life, is of decisive importance to an economy's competitiveness. A second point, this time referring back to the example of the motor vehicle repair trade. Motor vehicle mechanics in the USA are so highly motivated to work because they are all-round mechnics who work rather like an entrepreneur within the company employing them. Vehicle repair shops in the USA are organized very differently from those in Germany. They are divided into repair lines and each mechanic is responsible for all aspects of a vehicle on his repair line. A supervisor allocates incoming vehicles to the lines. The mechanics earn an extremely low basic wage plus a performance-based bonus. It is not uncommon for a motor vehicle mechanic to earn over US$ 100,000 per year, though some, especially the youngsters, earn only US$ 20,000. This example is intended to illustrate how in certain sectors a high level of skill can be generated without a highly developed vocational training system.

A final comment now on the question how vocational training in Europe can be improved. Rather like David Soskice I believe that we are at an historical crossroads. We must think about what the constitutive element of a European labour market should be. Is it its division into recognized occupations and the resulting occupational ethics and willingness to work along the lines "I owe it to my occupation to do a good job"? Or do we need a split labour market as is the case in Japan, where a minority are incorporated into core workforces (in large companies)? In other words willingness to work under the Damoclean sword known as mass unemployment or – hardly any better – a split labour market? Given these

alternatives I would argue forcefully for further developing and revaluing the recognized occupations structure and for a corresponding system of vocational training. Of course we need to modernize our existing occupations, but we should not forget that we tend generally to fight hard against any changes to the occupations which we pursue ourselves (academic occupations or professions). It could sound rather cynical that persons in academic occupations spend time thinking, sometimes rather fancifully, about reforming other occupations, about modules and about flexibility – as if a worker were merely a set of different skills. We need to hold a discussion on the constitutive element of a European labour market. My appeal would be for an employment system based on regulated occupations and the further improvement and modernization of a dual type of vocational training.

Panel Discussion

Global Competition: National Vocational Training Systems Under Pressure?

Panelists

Rainer Görtz (Ministry of Education, North Rhine-Westphalia), Düsseldorf; Dr. Ulrich Haase (Federal Ministry of Education and Science), Bonn; Prof. Dr. Joachim Münch (University of Kaiserslautern); Professor Dr Felix Rauner (University of Bremen); Renate Singvogel (German Employees' Trade Union), Hamburg; David Soskice (Science Center Berlin/University of Oxford); Dr Wilfried Vetter (Education Committee of the German Association of Commerce and Industry), Weiterstadt

Moderator

Marianne Durand-Drouhin (OECD), Paris

Rapporteurs

Dr Gisela Dybowski-Johannson, Tamara Korioth, Dr Jochen Reuling (BIBB), Berlin

Correlation between vocational training systems and global competition

That a correlation does exist between vocational training systems and global competition was an assumption shared by all the discussants, though it was pointed out that the strength of this correlation should not be overstated. Vocational training is undoubtedly one major factor determining a country's competitiveness, but certainly not the only factor. This was illustrated by a representative of German industry who, taking the example of setting up identical production installations in Germany, the USA and Japan, reported that substantial differences could be found in the time required in the three countries. Whereas the actual construction time is more or less comparable, the countries show vast differences in the time required for obtaining the necessary permits: two months in Japan, six months in the USA and two years in Germany. This suggests that entrepreneurs in the three countries operate within contextual conditions which of course have an impact on the country's competitiveness but do not have any direct link with that country's vocational training system.

That the correlation between a country's competitiveness and its vocational training system should not be overstated was also clear from the fact that Germany, the USA and Japan, for example, all three major industrial nations, have quite different vocational training systems but have so far all demonstrated that they are competitive. Competence and diligence can therefore be generated in various ways, and there are no clearly apparent system preferences. There is no such thing as the best way!

Comparison of these three countries reveals major differences in the way work is organized, a fact which has much to do with their different sociocultural backgrounds and their different industrial cultures. Future discussions on the further development of vocational training systems should therefore proceed from this fact. Vocational training research should invest more effort into finding out how a vocational training system can be made to contribute towards more competitive forms of work organization within the framework of the country's existing industrial culture and traditions.

How much do vocational systems in Europe need to have in common?

Pronounced differences in socioeconomic context and industrial culture exist not only between Germany, the USA and Japan but also among and between the states of Europe. These differences have led to these states developing different vocational training systems. During the discussion it was pointed out that economic competitiveness, although not the only yardstick against which the quality of vocational training systems should be measured, is indeed one of the more important ones. Other quality criteria include systems' capacity to react and adapt to socioeconomic challenges, their internal permeability, the degree to which they offer young people equality of opportunity, their capacity for preventing youth unemployment, etc. National systems differ depending on the priority rating attached to each of these criteria. This accounts for the diversity found within Europe in terms of vocational training systems.

A question nevertheless raised was whether the competitive global market and the development of the European Union will not exert pressure on European vocational training systems to become more closely harmonized. The discussants had different or differently accentuated views in this respect. Some argued that systems are not "transplantable" because of differences in national cultures and traditions. Others believed that a Europe-wide harmonization of production con-

ditions and work organization in some fields is indeed conceivable and that this could lead to harmonization of at least some aspects of vocational training systems in Europe. It was also considered conceivable that the goals for and standards to be met by vocational training systems in Europe could converge, though not to the extent of producing a "European" vocational training system.

The possibility of convergence and similarly directed developments in Europe once again raised the question what the constitutive characteristic of an emerging European labour market should be. The appeal for the regulated occupations concept to become the structural model for a European labour market was substantiated by the argument that such a concept can contribute much towards a country's political stability and culture. The consequence does not necessarily have to be a uniform European vocational training system.

The meeting agreed that the very fact that the challenges facing vocational training in the various industrial countries are partly common to all and partly specific to the country concerned should mean that all countries can learn from the solutions found by others. The discussion here concentrated on three aspects:

- the integration of low-achievement young people into training and employment;
- the relevance of academic knowledge acquired from higher education in relation to occupational competence acquired from vocational training;
- the need for more flexible vocational training systems in the light of technological change.

Integration of low-achievement young people into training and employment

This aspect was of particular interest to speakers representing trade unions in the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic. These countries, and even more so the USA, are facing the problem of having a high percentage of young people with virtually no or very restricted qualifications. The percentage figure for the United Kingdom is between 30 and 40% of each cohort of young people; the corresponding figure for Scotland – 45% – is even higher. The causes of this problem are seen in the fact that the Anglo-American vocational training model offers too few possibilities of training to skilled worker level. Young people realize that a vocational training to the current low standard would offer them few advantages in terms of social standing and career prospects and would indeed stigmatize

them for the future. They therefore prefer to do without a vocational training and instead try to find employment immediately after completing their compulsory education. The speakers from the UK claimed that neither industry nor the state have done enough for these young people in the past. The question was: What can be learned from the experience gained in Scandinavia, Austria and Germany in order to convince these young people of the merits of a vocational training – from the experience gained in countries where the problem of a lack of qualifications is by far not as acute? The question was then formulated more broadly to also take in continuing training for adults, partly because the countries with an inadequately structured initial training system face particular problems at the continuing training level, and partly because the percentage of older workers on the European labour market is continually increasing. The problem was thus recognized as being not only specifically British but also a European problem.

The strategies advanced for solving the problem remained controversial. *Soskice* perceived only limited possibilities of taking action at the initial training level in the United Kingdom because of the lack of institutional back-up. It was argued that the United Kingdom and Ireland had two possible strategies open to them: the relatively unpopular strategy of identifying what type of workplaces or jobs could be made available for the 30-40% of young people with minimal qualifications. *Soskice* considered that the private sector could not offer these young people any long-term opportunities, only dead-end jobs. If this is the case, these young people should not be released on to a deregulated labour market as they have been by the Conservative Government in the UK, for example. Referring to Scandinavian experience he claimed that the public sector is much more capable of giving such young people better employment prospects. If people with low qualifications can be offered prospects of long-term employment, these young people and their parents can thereby recognize the merits of opting for and completing a vocational training. The second strategy relates to experience gained in the USA. A notable feature of the American model is ease of access to community colleges, which give youngsters and young adults the possibility of continually upgrading their qualifications. The training courses run by the community colleges are heavily subsidized by the state. Seen within the UK context, however, such an alternative would run up against the problem that the mechanisms for financing continuing training there are not comparable with those in the USA. British companies do indeed invest in continuing training for their workforces, but only for relatively specialized skills and by no means for all members of their workforces.

The state would therefore have to invest much more in continuing training, the most promising models here being those based on individual support.

These proposals were not tabled without contradiction, the latter coming mainly from the Austrian and German delegations. With regard to the second alternative it was argued that despite the flexibility of the American system, the high percentage of young people with minimal qualifications is regarded as a problem of a scale which has caused even the US Administration to show an interest in European vocational training systems. Regarding the first strategy, the Austrian employers foresaw problems in failing to offer young people who are not capable of or interested in continuing their education suitable opportunities of acquiring a vocational qualification and relegating them instead into low-skill positions in the public sector: this would be tantamount to branding them as having learning difficulties. The Austrian example could demonstrate that a high percentage of youngsters with more practical abilities could indeed be accommodated in the private sector. The strategy proposed by Soskice would lead to or indeed consolidate an unfortunate polarization of society. The decisive question to be answered in the light of the competitiveness of vocational training systems has to be: To what extent can the various systems make full use of the full range of existing talents rather than of intellectual talents alone? The Austrian delegate considered that the systems clearly most successful in this respect are those which try to offer young people an alternative by offering them a vocational traineeship leading to a recognized vocational qualification. The German delegation also drew attention to Germany's extremely low youth unemployment rate compared with European averages, a rate which can be partly attributed to the fact that the German system offers all young people a broad-based, state-recognized vocational training.

Will the future call for more academic knowledge or more occupational competence?

The meeting showed a certain polarization of views regarding the question whether, in preparing their young people for the future, European states should give preference to higher education or to vocational training. Rauner put forward the view that the Anglo-American systems in particular drastically overstate the importance of an academic training. Careful thought should be given to the relative merits of a university or single-discipline training on the one hand and a training which is carried out in close proximity to real-life work processes on the other.

He expressed the view that the latter cannot be compensated for by an academic training, that it has its own intrinsic quality. The debate on lean production and the trend towards devolving responsibility to shop-floor workers have been the most recent phenomena to indicate to vocational training reseachers that it is high time to give greater consideration to the importance of practical, work-specific competence and how such competence can be developed in young people. Delegates from France, by contrast, asked whether the two approaches could and should not be combined: young people should remain in secondary and tertiary education and only then undergo a vocational traineeship in order to acquire the corresponding practical expertise.

The need for more flexible vocational training systems in the light of technological change

The structure of the Anglo-American vocational training model was shown to be highly flexible by virtue of its modular concept in both the horizontal and vertical dimensions. A more pronounced flexibility problem, by contrast, was seen in vocational training systems which are structured in line with state-recognized occupational profiles and which base their training content on the results of complex negotiation processes. The representatives of the German Government and German employers pointed out that the process of updating traineeship regulations and profiling new traineeship occupations takes too long and that there is a need to adjust more promptly to the rapid pace of technological change. Rauner, however, called for caution regarding the claim that human resources must also become more flexible as a result of constant technological change. The example of the medical doctor illustrates the point: this profession has remained despite the tremendous innovations introduced in medical technology. In his view, successfully managing the problem of adapting occupational profiles to keep abreast of technological change calls for a move away from a superficial understanding of technology and innovation in favour of a clearer understanding of work processes. Such a departure in thinking would lead to new occupational profiles which would be a suitable basis for managing technological change and innovation in a flexible manner.

Main Findings of the Workshop Sessions

Dr Hermann Schmidt,
Secretary-General of the Federal Institute
for Vocational Training, Berlin

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It falls to me to summarize the wide-ranging findings of this exceedingly problem-oriented and creative Congress and to try to bring together the new ideas and messages which have emerged from the individual working groups. Where appropriate I have condensed the findings of the workshops into messages. If anyone feels that my summing up has been too broad or too narrow in any respect, then I should of course be grateful for any guidance which will help to broaden the reach of the message.

Workshop A1 tackled the issue of cooperation in border areas. The discussions highlighted many examples which corroborated the fact that the border areas, the "Euregios" as we often call them, are the real motors for Europe and that in these areas, the issues of harmonization, subsidiarity or any of the other questions which dominate the political agenda, take a back seat. The real concern here is the practical question of providing training for the people of these regions. We would hope that the practical solutions which emerge in this process will find their way into the wider arena of European politics.

The message is: Let us expand the "Euregios" to take in the neighbouring areas so that we can develop "breeding grounds" for acceptance, Europe-wide, of new concepts in vocational training.

Workshop A2 dealt with the subject of major companies operating within Europe which face training problems of a transnational nature. It emerged that large companies are confronted with a variety of national vocational training structures to which they react in one of two ways: some companies develop a central strategy which they enforce in all their subsidiaries in Europe; others leave it to their foreign subsidiaries to develop their own training concepts as they see fit. Thus there is no

uniform method of procedure for the big companies. It is apparent, however, that where these companies develop special training strategies, these systems can more accurately be described as international than European. In other words, these are companies which operate globally and whose training strategies apply worldwide rather than having a special European dimension.

The message from the workshop is: Large companies are breeding grounds for the development of transnational training. There is scope for greater attention to be focused on them in national and European vocational training policies in the process of developing a European vocational training policy.

Workshop A3 on decentralized initiatives and European promotion programmes concluded that once a general framework of European vocational training policy with clearly defined objectives is in place, it will be possible to take on board local and regional approaches and solutions for national and European vocational training policy. "Best practices", to use the term frequently associated with such models, are often very differently defined depending on the differing stages of development of the vocational training systems. I am reminded here of the American term "world class standard", which always leaves me wondering what that may be. In general, the answer is simply "The Best!". Workshop A3 concluded that this is the province of the employers and trades unions who must determine in dialogue how the content, level and final qualifications are to be defined to ensure that they are accepted on the jobs market as recognized qualifications.

The message here is: The added value for Europe of these decentralized initiatives and European promotion programmes derives not simply from the usability of transnational solutions but from the contribution they make to system development within the individual countries, an aspect which needs to be given more consideration in future.

Workshop B1 tackled occupation-related foreign language skills. As in previous congresses, foreign language skills were identified as the prime skill for Europe-wide competence; this applies to every individual who works in a transnational context. It was recognized, however, that opinions vary from occupation to occupation as to what the actual requirements are. There is general agreement, however, that the most effective way to learn foreign languages in the context of a particular occupation is to take part in an exchange, to live for a period abroad, or to train or work abroad. This consensus of opinion arises largely from the lack of national job-related foreign language teaching theory and methodology in the

Dr Hermann Schmidt
Secretary-General of the
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schools and other establishments involved in vocational training. A further important point raised was the need to place the emphasis in occupation-related foreign language learning on the ability to communicate rather than mastery of the finer points of grammar. If we are to achieve equivalence with the higher education sector, it is essential for us to increase dramatically the number of people taking part in vocational training exchange schemes. For Germany in particular this means that the exchange element should take place after completion of initial vocational training; the dual form of vocational training unique to Germany would make any lengthy period of exchange during training problematical.

The message is : Exchange, exchange, exchange!

Workshop B2 dealt with occupational skills for Europe-wide competence. Once again foreign language skills were identified as the most important skill in terms of Europe-wide competence. Nevertheless, there are very divergent views on the part of employers, trades unions and within the different occupations as to what should or must constitute European competence in relation to specific occupations. The demand is clearly identifiable in sectors such as wholesale and foreign trade, banking, transport, tourism and, following the most recent European environmental regulations, environmental protection. The European programmes of

recent years have therefore been involved in devising training modules for the development of occupational Euro-skills. There was a call for these to be incorporated in coming years into national curricula, where this is regarded as necessary in a particular branch.

The message here is: Exchange, exchange, exchange, with the added call for national promotion measures to be aligned to a greater extent to the requirements I have described. Many national instruments, for example the German Employment Promotion Act, are currently restricted to a national basis and stop at the border.

Workshop B3 was devoted to the subject of providing training for young unskilled workers. Representatives of all the countries rated the future prospects of young people without vocational qualifications as increasingly bleak. All countries are therefore willing to introduce measures to train young adults in this position, but stress that, in comparison with training following directly on from school, such schemes need to be more closely geared to practical work. There are two ways that young unskilled workers can be trained. One method is for them to go back and take a formal training course leading to a vocational qualification. The other method involves individual training modules which young people take while they work and for which they receive certificates. These modules lead, either within the context of the workplace or in conjunction with outside training establishments, to a formal vocational qualification.

The message here is:

Firstly: This issue is very particularly a matter for dialogue between the social partners. In terms of training unskilled young people, the state is relatively helpless if employers and trades unions cannot develop solutions which they can present to the government for support.

Secondly: We must look for new ways to provide untrained young people with skills. The attitude that this or that is simply not possible has obviously been instrumental hitherto in our failure to make headway in this issue.

Thirdly: We must take positive steps towards certificating and recognizing work experience and prior learning in the individual portfolios which we have so often talked about in the past in order to remove once and for all the discrimination against work experience.

Workshop C1 looked at the prospects for company-based vocational training. The group agreed that in many European countries the low social status of vocational training was one of the main obstacles hindering its future development. Compared with school-based academic educational courses, vocational training opened up fewer career opportunities across the board in all the countries in question, although surprisingly, all those involved said that hands-on training had considerable advantages in terms of learning motivation and costs to society as a whole and to the individual. Nevertheless, nearly all societies involve themselves in costly and circuitous routes through school and university, motivated more by a wish to achieve social status than to seek what is actually needed: vocational skills.

The message is: Achieving equal status for vocational training in terms of both qualifications and social status in a variety of ways via general and via vocational training is the prerequisite for the development not just of an effective vocational training system but of an effective education system as a whole. This means that it is vital to continue developing vocational training systems on an autonomous basis to ensure that they are also able to offer access to senior management positions, access which is at present predominantly the preserve of graduates from general and academic courses of education. I have been saying this, ladies and gentlemen, for the past 30 years and I never tire of repeating it.

Continuing vocational training and organization development were the subjects of the work of *Workshop C2*. It was recognized in the context of the continuing training of skilled blue-collar and white-collar staff that there was a growing danger of such personnel losing out to those who entered the company sideways via school and academic courses. These points which emerged from the discussion within the working group corresponded to those from the previous group. The point was made that continuing vocational training is acknowledged universally as a flexible means of adapting to the numerous changes in technology, work organization, industry and society, and work-related forms of continuing training are gaining increasing importance in the context of modern management concepts such as "lean production" and "total quality". However, these forms of training receive insufficient recognition and certification with respect to ongoing qualifications.

The message is: Continuing vocational training courses must be developed to provide training beyond the present intermediate-level qualifications of master craftsman or technician; they need to be geared to people in work and involve

increased cooperation between companies and further education establishments, including the universities. In other words, increased cooperation is the key in designing and developing continuing training courses. This brings us back to the start and the similar demands formulated by Workshop C1.

Workshop C3 tackled the subject of vocational training systems and global competition. All the European countries, and here I would like to include our colleagues from the central and eastern European countries who have taken part in this Congress, confirm what the worldwide debate has already indicated: there is a direct correlation, although it is often difficult to prove, between system of training and qualifications and economic success. Where competitiveness is concerned, professional competence and motivation to perform were identified as the key criteria, although – and this is also important – it was not possible to deduce any preference for one particular vocational training system. There is therefore no such thing as "one best way".

The message that can be distilled from this workshop is that sociocultural context and industrial history and tradition exert a considerable but varying influence on the organization of labour within Europe. This fact must be taken as the starting point for the development of vocational training systems and for vocational training research in the various countries. The Germans naturally tend to argue for their concept of clearly structured and state-recognized occupations as one of the crucial elements of their system, but there was also endorsement for this concept from countries other than the German-speaking countries. At the same time, the view was not shared by all, nor would one have expected it to be.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have tried to summarize in the space of 25 minutes the findings which emerged from the workshops over a period of many hours of work. The summary is of necessity incomplete. I would therefore like to thank you all very much for taking the trouble to consider again whether this Congress has produced anything more than we already knew from past congresses. From our point of view and particularly given the current situation regarding vocational training in Europe, I would like to confirm that it has indeed been worth it and to thank you for your work. I should also like to thank those who contributed to the smooth running of the workshops and the Congress as a whole. Finally I would like to thank the interpreters whose linguistic skills have helped ensure that the proceedings are understood by all.

Many thanks!

Closing Discussion

Panelists

Achilleas Mitsos (Director, Task Force Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth), Commission of the European Union; Erik Nexelman (Director of Division, Undervisningsministeriet), Denmark; Neill Schofield (Director of Training Strategy and Infrastructure, Department of Employment), United Kingdom; Dr Fritz Schaumann (Under-Secretary of State, Federal Ministry of Education and Science), Germany; Jacques Trautmann (Deputy Director, Vocational Training Division, Ministry of Labour, Employment and Vocational Training), France

Moderator

Dr Alfred Hardenacke (Federal Ministry of Education and Science), Bonn

Dr Hardenacke:

Ladies and gentlemen, I would first like to thank Dr Schmidt most warmly for making the impossible possible. As a representative of the Federal Institute, he knows that in thanking him personally, I also thank all those members of his staff who were involved in the preparations for the Congress. Now I would like to introduce the last section of our Congress, in which I shall try to evaluate our wide-ranging findings in terms of their importance for the future.

Allow me first to introduce the members of the panel, beginning with Mr Erik Nexelmann, representing Denmark and the Danish Ministry of Education, in which he holds the position of Deputy Director of the Vocational Training Division. Next to him sits Mr Jacques Trautmann, deputy Délégué à la formation professionelle in France, a coordinating function which is difficult to translate but can perhaps be best rendered by Director-General for Vocational Training within the French Ministry of Labour. On my right sits Under-Secretary of State Dr Fritz Schaumann from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Science, who was previously a member of the North Rhine-Westphalian parliament and a university lecturer. He has also himself undergone a course of training in the dual system. On my left is Mr Achilles Mitsos. Mr Mitsos is Director of the Task Force Human Resources, which is responsible for vocational training. Although he has not been long at his

post, he has already shown himself to be very committed to championing the cause of vocational training in all directions. On the outside sits Mr Neill Schofield, Director of the Vocational Training Division within the Department of Employment in the United Kingdom.

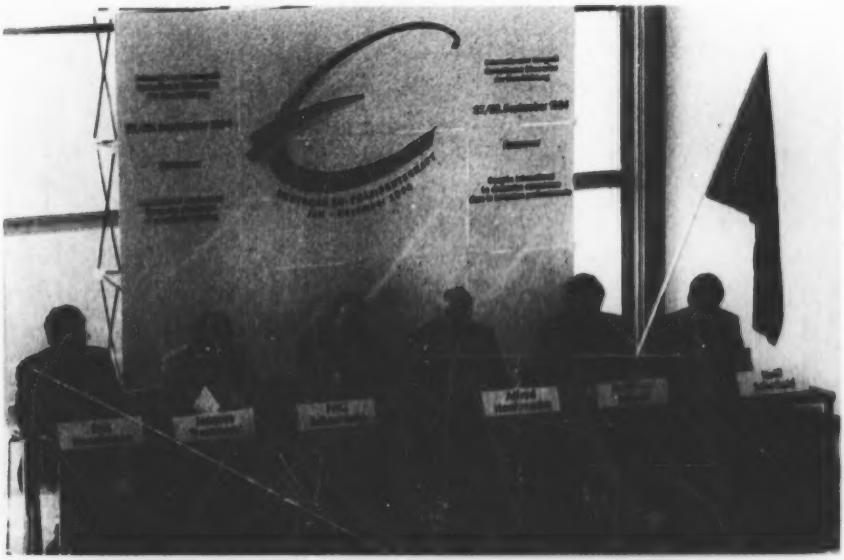
Ladies and gentlemen, we have undertaken to evaluate the findings of this Congress in terms of their political significance. Since first and foremost the Congress has European terms of reference, I would like to call first on Mr Mitsos to give us his comments.

Achilleas Mitsos:

Dr Schmidt managed to give an excellent summary of some 20 hours of work in 25 minutes and now I will do my best to manage the difficult task of reporting on the major priorities of the Community's action in this area in only 5 minutes.

Firstly though, let me say that I believe the great merit of this Congress is that it combines discussions on theory with an exhibition of the real work being done at university and enterprise level. And because of this great merit I urge you to go and take a look at the FORCE and COMETT stands at the exhibition because after visiting the other stands you might well be asking yourself: Is the Community's action really needed? You may be thinking that the initiatives you see presented there are being carried out by certain companies or jointly by companies and universities and so what, then, is the Commission's role? Why did they need the Commission? If you put that question to the people there you will get a clear answer. The Commission's role is not to subsidize something which would have been done anyway. It is not even to transfer or communicate knowledge from one place to another. It goes much deeper than that but is also much less straightforward. The Commission assumes the role of a catalyst, bringing people together in order to go beyond merely exchanging experience and strike out in the direction of a European system which pools all this experience and the corresponding analytical and other resources with a view to improving European training policy.

Now, there are two points I would like to stress. The first concerns the transfer of the experience already gained to a larger audience – to different countries, different enterprises and so on. I believe that this is an area where, although there have been some very important achievements, much more remains to be done. The LEONARDO programme could help in this respect. During the first reading of the LEONARDO programme, the Council adopted a special section on the dissem-



ination of results which is intended to secure the widest possible dissemination of the experience gained by universities and companies in this field.

To turn to my second point – I will be brief because I referred to this yesterday on behalf of Professor Ruberti – I must stress how difficult it is to tackle the issue of lifelong learning. Much of the difficulty derives from the fact that lifelong learning represents a clear departure from our conventional conception of education and training and breaks down some of the artificial barriers – administrative and others – that we have traditionally regarded as untouchable: barriers between education and training, barriers between initial training and continuing training, barriers between training and work – or, if you prefer, the barriers between knowledge and professional activity. Another difficulty concerns terminology, and the Council has had some problems trying to find a suitable term for lifelong learning in all languages because I understand that different languages have different concepts of what it entails. We chose the Latin word "continuum" to describe the process, the major advantage of Latin and Greek being that you can borrow from them and everyone understands what is meant. Nonetheless even this astute choice of terminology has not yet solved all the problems.

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The last point I would like to make concerns the direct link between training policy and structure policy, or, in other words, the complementarity, the synergy, the partnership which associates their respective objectives, players and instruments. That which associates them is in fact more than a link, it is an integral part of policy-making in each field. The Commission is therefore trying to bring together the three different worlds involved: the employment world, the training world and the development world. If the Commission can bring them together and convince each of these different worlds of the need to include training as an integral part of their policy-making, that, I believe, will be a major achievement.

Dr Hardenacke:

Thank you very much, Mr Mitsos. I now call on Under-Secretary of State Dr Schaumann.

Dr Schaumann:

Mr Chairman, I do not wish at this point to go too deeply into the question: why do we need the European Commission? It is an interesting question, Mr Mitsos, which might possibly lead to some surprising findings where vocational training policy is concerned. However, this is definitely not my intention, and instead I want to return to the main substance of the Congress and in so doing, refer back to Mr Schmidt's summary. It is obvious to me that we have reached a fair degree of agreement in our findings as to the nature of the problem. The main issues tackled in the workshops were similar to those which influence the national debate on vocational training policy. For this reason alone, I feel it is important and worthwhile to have an organized framework within which to conduct an exchange of ideas and experiences. It is my belief that we need a more fundamental understanding of the goals, the possibilities and the practical application of vocational training policy in all its many forms. I concur wholeheartedly with the sentiment: "It is to be hoped that we will never in the foreseeable future have one vocational training policy in Europe." We should instead focus our efforts on expanding our cooperation in the future and learning more from each other than we have done hitherto, while at the same time retaining the diversity of our systems, goals and, of course, our convictions. For this, I am convinced, is the source from which

Europe draws its sustenance. Therefore, Mr Mitsos, in response to your important and enduring question: "What are European institutions to do?", I would say, in a similar vein to you, that I expect these institutions to do all they possibly can to support the exchange of experiences, to concentrate on organizing rather than implementing transnational cooperation, and to focus their work on the value added which it is hoped will arise from these activities. It is no coincidence that we have concentrated on vocational training policy during the six months of the German presidency. We are convinced that we can learn more from each other than we have done up to now through cooperation and exchanges of experiences and that we should set about systematically developing forms of joint working and training, as we have been doing here for many years in our vocational schools, for example.

We hope that these efforts to crystallize vocational training policy as a central issue of the presidency will also be reflected in a Council resolution on vocational training policy. I am delighted that consultations on the resolution so far indicate that all Member States, whatever their background, consider this to be a major issue and that they all show a high degree of convergence in their estimations of the problems. Thirdly I am very pleased that it seems likely – and here I am being optimistic – that the resolution will include pointers to future solutions to the problem, even though they will certainly differ from each other.

It is also gratifying that, as you highlighted Mr Schmidt, two points have been highlighted in the Congress which coincide with what we should like to see happen. The first point emerged from the workshop on foreign language skills. We have submitted a similar concept for discussion with the governments of the federal states and the social partners. I hope that we will be able to develop it further, benefiting from the exchange of experiences we have been engaged in here. The second issue relates to the workshop on training disadvantaged young people and the long-term unemployed among them. We recently developed a plan of action for this group; one of our country's major problems is the fact that more than 10% of young people from any one age cohort fail to acquire any qualifications. We share the view represented here that these unskilled young people are particularly vulnerable in terms of their personal lives and their job prospects. It is a problem which we need to address urgently and actively, with the involvement of schools and vocational training establishments engaged in initial and continuing training.

I would also like to take the opportunity of this brief intervention to discuss one other central point. What does equivalence mean in Germany? It is a matter of language, a point which struck me as I listened to Mr Mitsos when he said we must link education and training. This in itself reveals a considerable degree of difference between systems within Europe. We do not really make this distinction in Germany, and our vocational training concepts are all based on the premise that the training as such – i.e. the imparting of technical knowledge, ability and skills – will also help promote education in general. But to return to the matter of equivalence, since equivalence is also an issue which applies to this concept of education and training, at least in terms of expectations. Equivalence, Mr Schmidt, and this is where we disagree slightly, is not for me tied to social status, as you expressed it, since in terms of demand, it is increasing all the time. 70% of young people in these age groups seek vocational training. In many cases, however, they regard it as a transition stage in their education and, in answering the question "Why is that so?", I am in agreement with you again. Vocational training, it is apparent, does not offer the individual the same basis in terms of development potential that is unquestionably offered by other forms of education.

In Germany those of us engaged in the vocational training debate are in the process of turning our attention to the framework conditions, as we call them. We are well aware that this will be an exceptionally difficult social debate because it will have to focus on such areas as the structure of the public service, which represents a classic example of the undervaluing of professional qualifications. I am under absolutely no illusion about the difficulties ahead, but I consider it to be both right and crucial to conduct this debate. I will leave the matter there since I am confined to five minutes and do not wish to try your patience, Mr Chairman.

Dr Hardenacke:

Thank you very much for your contribution, Dr Schaumann, much of which fitted into the very nub of the discussions of the working groups.
Mr Trautmann will speak next to give us the French perspective.

Jacques Trautmann:

Yesterday, during Group C's first workshop session, the chairman, Mr Hayes, stressed that our society is undergoing a process of far-reaching change, this being particularly apparent as regards work organization and the pressure for competitiveness and flexibility, and that all these factors are having a very pronounced impact on vocational training systems. The discussion focused on training for young people, but of course the points made would apply likewise to the broader field of both initial and continuing training.

I would like to link up those observations with the discussion the group held this morning on the development of national vocational training systems. I agree with Mr Hayes on the importance of looking into the future and working out which type of vocational training system will be best suited to future needs rather than concentrating unduly on the systems we have in place at the moment. That, I believe, is the real challenge because today, asking whether harmonization is possible at European level is to miss the point entirely. Indeed, one could imagine some kind of hybrid incorporating the British NVQ system for recognizing vocational qualifications, the German dual system of training for young people and the French system of training leave, but such a hybrid would not only be very complex and incoherent, it would also be – and this is far more serious – light years behind what we need in order to face up to the challenges of today and the future.

I believe that the task of the Commission and the Member States today is to identify the key issues, the key problems to which solutions must be found, and to mobilise all the energy and inventiveness which is undoubtedly available within us with a view to finding solutions which will open up new paths into the future.

During the past two days much has been said about guiding young people towards vocational education and training rather than general education. But other issues were raised at a rather secondary level and I would like to remind you of one of these: training as a support measure to help people return to employment or change employment (although the latter function is not discussed much today because during times of crisis the main preoccupation is access to employment). But this is indeed a problem issue: people with jobs who, at 35 or 40 years of age, consider they have a right to aim for a more enriching career, women who stopped working in order to bring up their children and now want to return to work. The problems of getting a first job, returning to work or changing jobs are linked to the question as to what training measures can accompany these efforts and what their content might be (bearing in mind that the concern for flexibility

is today blurring conventional occupational demarcations). This is essentially the formidable problem of anticipating skill needs and recognizing competences in a world which is becoming increasingly complex. To my mind this is also a key issue.

A further key issue: Social considerations are very important and much has been said about these, but mainly from the viewpoint of encouraging young people to opt for a vocational type of training. But we must also take account of a certain demand for a right to higher education. I must stress again that vocational training systems today in most of the Member States, especially those based on in-company training, do not provide for any regular path of access to higher education. Once the vocational qualification has been obtained, there are few possibilities of proceeding further.

And here again – another key issue – what we need is not system convergence but greater transparency within our systems. In this connection I welcome the German initiative to develop the statistics on education and training systems. This is essential because once we have a clear idea – in terms of both quality and quantity – of what all the Member States are doing we will be better placed to introduce more competition – not so much between systems as between the schemes and measures offered by the various Member States. Transparency with regard to courses throughout the Union will also allow us to take a more detached view of our own system and its functioning.

One point is relevant, however, with regard to all these problems to which we are called upon to find answers. The answers – and I believe this was the main topic discussed by another group – will have to be based on a bottom-up approach, primarily through programmes – such as LEONARDO, ADAPT and others to develop human resources – which are able to implement new ideas in project activities on a transnational basis.

Another point which I believe has not been sufficiently stressed is the problem of subsidiarity. In referring to a problem here, I mean that subsidiarity should apply not only to relations between the Union and the Member States but also to relations between government authorities and the social partners. It seems to me that the arrangement which has been applied in connection with vocational training – particularly for young people but also all the other types of training I referred to earlier – shows how some problems can be made easier to solve, namely by involving the social partners, the professional associations, employers and employees. In France we are trying to promote apprenticeship and alternance types of training and are presently concentrating on ways and means of financing such training.

But these matters – what I refer to as the rules of the game – must be decided on by the social partners. I sometimes think that we are missing the real point in our current discussions, but that is a problem for France to solve. I mention this, though, simply to illustrate the fact that as long as employers, indeed the social partners in general, are reluctant to invest in training – whether for the young people they recruit through a contract of employment or for their existing workforce – and as long as they prefer to recruit their skilled workers from the labour market in deference to a concern to keep ahead of ever fiercer competition, the authorities will be very reticent in any action they take. Indeed, I believe that all matters relating to initial and continuing vocational training are first and foremost matters for the attention of the social partners. It is primarily the social partners who should be called upon to define the new rules of the game. Rules and regulations can indeed be too constraining and there is certainly a need for more flexibility, but there is also a need for what I refer to as the rules of the game. These will be more practicable and better respected if they are defined by the social partners. If, of course, they fail to produce these new rules, then the authorities would have to step into the breach. But at the moment it seems that this is not where the real problems lie.

Dr Hardenacke:

Many thanks, Mr Trautmann, for your contribution. It would be interesting at this point to hear from Mr Schofield, who reports from a completely different background.

Neill Schofield:

I think so much has been said at this Congress which has been common and shared between people that it's not the right thing at this stage to go through all the points of agreement. I would, though, like to pick up and endorse the points that were made by other panelists and indeed have been a running theme of the Congress: the need for flexibility. I think of myself and my own thought processes and I question whether I have taken on board at anything like the level I need to do so the need for flexibility that is going to arise over the next few years. We talk about the pace of technological change, we talk about the changing use of mate-

rials, the changing expectations, the changing pressures on society and yet I just wonder about myself, whether I have really absorbed all of that fully so that it is part of my way of thinking and approaching every issue that arises. And so I would very much endorse the points made in this respect.

Another point I would like to pick out of the Congress as it has affected me and as I have taken part in it and shared in it is the question of diversity. I think it has been very good to hear the recognition of the need for and value of diversity between the Member States and the approaches. It struck me, though, that we also need to think very much in terms of diversity within Member States with regard to approaches to problems. In dealing with the problems we've been discussing, the problems of vocational training, we are not looking at things that have one solution, one answer, one panacea. I think we're very much thinking of a whole range of ways of dealing with these problems, a whole range of ways that come together and bear on them much more effectively. An example from my own country, the United Kingdom: certainly we've seen rapidly growing rates of young people entering university – we've now got 35 % of our age group in university, a very high proportion, but we also have been anxious to recognize the value of the vocational training route and, as my French colleague has been saying, we too have been looking to strengthen the opportunities for young people to undergo vocational training based in the workplace, with an employer, with an additional input from colleges or other places that provide the more theoretical underpinning as part of an overall pattern of provision for young people. I don't think we're talking about one answer, one solution or one way of tackling these issues. So, to come back to the term I started with, diversity – not just diversity between Member States but also diversity of approaches within Member States.

The other thing that I'd like to reflect on a little is whether in this Congress and in our other discussions we give enough thought to harnessing and enabling the motivation of individuals themselves. We tend to talk quite a lot about employers providing training, about schools, universities, and so on. And I just wonder whether we give enough weight to the way in which the individual can play his or her part in this. I say this because for most of our economies it's a basic assumption that it is the individual who owns the skills, it is only in some economies when you look around the world where in any sense one can think that the employer owns the skills that have been developed in people. That the individual owns the skills is to my mind a fundamentally important point. It is the individual who has

the biggest reason to want to nurture and develop those skills because it will be the individual who will own them at the end of the day.

Dr Hardenacke:

Thank you very much Mr Schofield. Mr Nexelmann, you have the thankless task of being the last to speak.

Erik Nexelmann:

What I have found particularly interesting among the many issues discussed at this Congress has been the discussion on what we could call a narrow or specialized education on the one hand and a broader, general, more academic education on the other. This discussion is, to my mind, not only interesting but also very important in the light of the development of industry and indeed society and democracy in Europe. We in Europe have a workforce which we tend to see as polarized – a workforce at a-level or b-level or whatever terms are applied in our various languages to indicate this polarization. Now, we know that people are not equal, but on the other hand we want everyone to be part of society and, if possible, part of the workforce. Therefore reflection on what is the best model for and way of developing education and training for young people and adults is a very important matter of democracy. Maybe the European dimension in education and training is a dimension which not only educates and trains but also gives people the possibility of acquiring knowledge and skills which are relevant to themselves as part of their personal development, relevant to the needs of industry and relevant to the needs of society as seen from a democratic angle. I can tell you that we in Denmark are very worried and concerned about this problem. We see young people with no qualifications and we see that the result is that they are lost. Of course education does not solve all the problems, but on the other hand one cannot solve problems without education. I agree on the importance of flexibility, but to my mind an important consideration here is whether flexibility should be sought first and foremost in the development of educational systems or in the personal flexibility which is the result of a sound education and training for every individual. Maybe it is neither the one thing nor the other, but having said that I am by no

means sure that it will be possible for us to develop education and training systems at the speed required by the needs of industry. Perhaps we need to have flexibility inside too, more personal flexibility than has been the case in the past.

Dr Hardenacke:

Many thanks, Mr Nexelmann. I would just like to glance at the panel to see if anybody wishes to comment on any of the contributions; apparently not. Then I would like to use the short time that remains to us to give you the chance to contribute to the discussion and give us your views.

It has been very taxing so far, so I can understand the reaction. Mr Mitsos in any case wished to say something more.

Achilleas Mitsos:

Many thanks, Mr Chairman. Sometimes when I have to defend the Commission in a panel discussion, I have the impression that people have different expectations of the Commission. Some try to show that the Commission is not what they think it should be, but this is also what the Commission never claimed to be. What I mean to say is that the Commission is no substitute for national governments. There is no intention that national actions be replaced by Community actions. That is not our ambition. It is quite clearly stated in the White Paper, and was reaffirmed by the heads of state and government in December 1992, that the role of each individual Member State is always to be clearly defined. This was unequivocal, and the following was stressed: The Commission should define Community goals; it should specify what goals there are and seek agreement on these goals. Then we should leave it to each Member State to do what it can to achieve these goals. The Community can then supplement these national efforts with all those measures which can be taken at Community but not at national level. That is the essence of our intentions and we do not pretend to do anything else. We are not tutors who know the answers in advance and award good or bad marks to national systems. That is not what we are, nor what we claim to be. Harmonization is not our aim here – not because Article 127 of the Treaty clearly states that harmonization should not be the aim, but because it is not the approach we have adopted to achieve the goals we have set ourselves. There is no reason to state that harmon-

ization is not the way, because we do not want harmonization. Convergence of the systems may be an arbitrary way of tackling the problem, but it is of necessity arbitrary. We must find ways and means at Commission level to motivate the different players and to engage all endogenous forces to achieve this goal. And when I talk about endogenous forces, I mean the forces at both government and at private level: companies, universities, management and unions, all those players who can help ensure that this goal is achieved. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Dr Hardenacke:

Mr Mitsos, the reaction shows you how important your comments are. It also shows you that they were necessary. In the course of the LEONARDO programme we sometimes had the impression that this clarifying process within the Commission was not as advanced as you have described it today. I therefore applaud the Commission's receptiveness, a quality which, after all, fits in well with the theme of our Congress. Thank you very much for this clarification. We are all pleased that we can continue the cooperation on a new, or at least partially new basis of trust.

I now call on Under-Secretary of State Schaumann to say a few closing words on behalf of the organizers of the Congress.

Dr Schaumann:

Mr Mitsos, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your clarification because I have absolutely no occasion to doubt your firm intentions, particularly not if the actions of the Commission also always correspond with its firm intentions. I am pleased that this will be so in the future.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for taking the opportunity to participate actively in this exchange of experiences, and to bring us all, especially those of us who are actively involved, one step further – and here I am in full agreement with what Mr Mitsos has just said – towards considering the following questions. What are the European goals of our cooperation? On what should we concentrate our resources in the future? Despite my reservations about congresses such as this, I feel that they should not be one-off events; they have an important part to play in institutionalizing a permanent exchange of experiences. I am very grateful to the Commission, Mr Mitsos, for the active assistance of Brussels which

helped make this possible. This occasion in Hannover, coupled with the Skills Fair, has certainly provided an effective framework for the exchange of experiences and for reflecting on future ways forward. I would therefore like to thank the exhibition company for making this possible. We must not forget the people who have worked to ensure that the Congress could take place here. I refer to the staff of the Federal Institute for Vocational Training. Many thanks to you, Mr Schmidt, and to the members of your staff. It would also be unfair of me to leave out my own colleagues, the staff of the Federal Ministry of Education and Science. You have my sincere thanks for helping to put in place the organizational backbone of this event.

I hope the debate will continue on the points mentioned by Mr Schmidt and that we will continue to learn more from one another. I also hope that you have gleaned valuable experience from the event and I wish you a safe journey home.

Thank you!

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